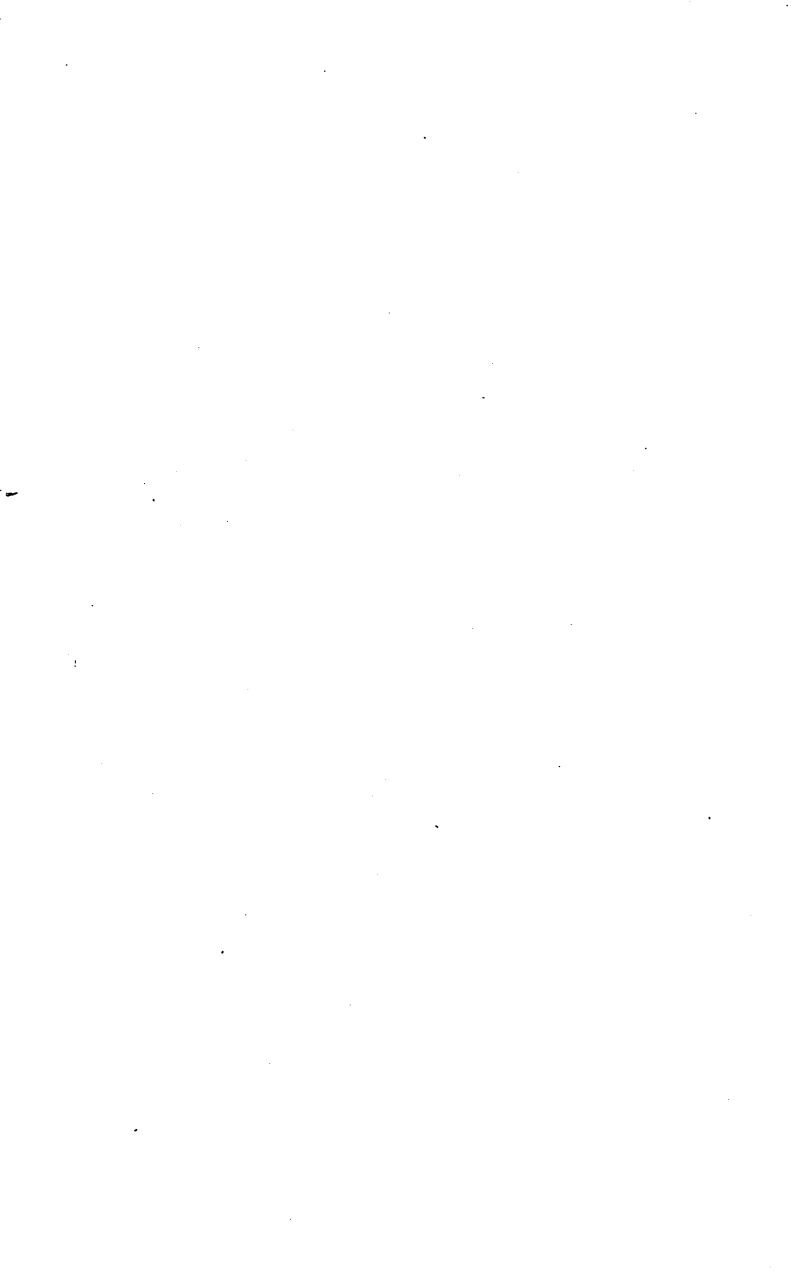
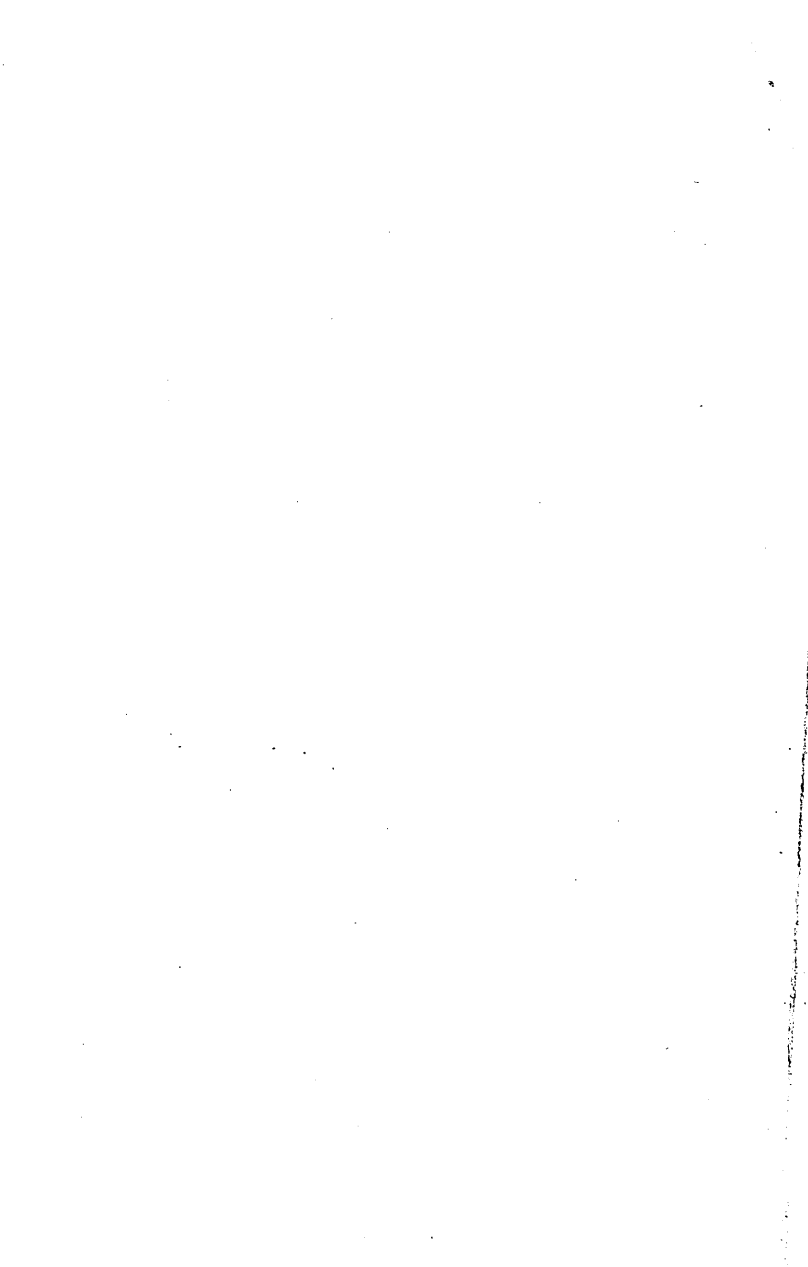


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THE ELEMENTS OF COMPARATIVE  
THEOLOGY



# THE ELEMENTS OF COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

by

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*Prof. [illegible]*

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TO  
MY WIFE





## PREFACE

THE ever-increasing knowledge we have of other religions, and the close contacts of the modern world make it more and more imperative for the student to-day to know something of non-Christian beliefs. A short comparative survey of the elements of theology can do little more than open up the way for further study, and, with this object in view, the attempt is made to bring together some of the salient beliefs in order to make their comparison easier. The non-Christian religions dealt with are those which have survived into modern times, viz., Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam and Judaism. The Christian position is stated in a section at the end of each chapter.

Consideration is given at the outset to the sacred literature, as the main source of theological belief, and to any theories of revelation and inspiration associated with the literature. This is followed up by the central theme, the belief in God or a Supreme spiritual Reality. Theology is strictly the science of the being and nature of Deity, and all other subjects are subsidiary to this. Christian theology is distinctive in that it involves the belief in a Supreme Incarnation, the Revelation of God in Christ. The chief subsidiary doctrines dealt with are those of Creation, Man and Salvation. Some consideration is also given in each section to theological development posterior to the original sources.

As a scientific investigation the following study

aims at impartiality, guided by the belief that degrees of truth appear in all religions. But the conviction expressed in the Christian sections that in Christ 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' has inevitably affected the treatment of the non-Christian sections. It is hoped, however, that any such influence has not prevented a fair presentation of beliefs, which are as sacred to their adherents as the absoluteness of Christianity is to the Christian disciple.

The references to S.B.E. and E.R.E. in the footnotes are to the *Sacred Books of the East* and the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, respectively.

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## CHAPTER I

# THE SACRED LITERATURE AND THEORIES OF REVELATION

A RELIGION can hardly be said to have a theology anterior to the age of written records. Through the medium of the written word it rises to a clearer understanding of its beliefs and their implications. The fact of religion is, so far as we can tell, co-eval with man, but the formulation and systematization of belief depends mainly on written documents, though, as in Buddhism, oral tradition may have a large share in shaping belief. In all great religions a certain number of documents eventually come to be regarded as authoritative or sacred. They provide a standard or norm for measuring and regulating faith and practice, and hence they are all, in some sense, 'canonical.'

The sacredness of these documents can be said to vary according to the belief in 'revelation' associated with them. Some records such as those of Shintoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism claim no more status than that of human productions, giving an account of divine things, others, e.g., the Hindu Vedas, though originally naturalistic in character, have been raised to the status of 'revelation' by a later age. Some records have been associated, from the beginning, with an original claim to direct revelation, either by belief in the inspiration of the founder as in Zoroastrianism and



Islam, or by belief in a theophany as in the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita*. There is only one document associated with Incarnation as the final Word of God to man, viz., the Christian Bible. By classifying these documents according to the claims made for them they form a series from the purely naturalistic records of Shintoism to the inspired record of Christianity, with its accompanying belief in the Incarnation of the Son of God.

### (a) NATURALISTIC RECORDS

#### (i) *Shintoism—without any theory of revelation*

Shintoism, the natural religion of Japan, possesses a religious literature which makes no claim to having been inspired. The documents are revered because of their contents, and are authoritative as the most ancient written sources of the religion, but were actually composed, and are regarded, as ordinary literary productions.

Kami no michi ('the way of the Gods') is the native name for Shintoism, the latter being a Chinese title (*Shên* god, *tao* way). It has no historical founder, and is essentially a nature religion preserving into recent times the marks of a primitive cult anterior to the age of written documents. Writing was practically unknown in Japan before the fifth century A.D., and it was not until the eighth century after the influx of Buddhist and other Chinese ideas, that Japan attained a clear national consciousness and produced documents to preserve the memories of earlier times and to establish the divine ancestry of the ruling family.

The oldest of these compilations is the *Kojiki* or

'Records of Ancient Matters' written, at the instance of the State, from the fertile memory of Hiieda no Are, and completed in A.D. 712. This was followed by the *Nihongi*, another official document, finished in 720. These treatises claim to be historical records tracing back the national annals to the mythical 'age of the gods.' The narrative is prolific in myth and legend of a very primitive character, to which some later writers, notably Kamo-Norikiyo (*d.* 1861) have applied an allegorical method. Chinese influence on these documents is apparent, both in idea and expression, and though reformers such as Motoöri and Hirata (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) regard them as teaching 'Pure Shinto,' apart from borrowing, the modern authority Anesaki maintains that the 'exact amount of foreign influence cannot be ascertained.' A later secondary source is entitled the 'Institutes of the Period Yengi' (901-923) or the *Yengishiki*, giving an account of religious ceremonial and containing the *norito* or ancient ritual-formulae of Shintoism.

In the strict sense these documents are not sacred books, but human records of the ancient religion. They are appealed to as ancient authorities, but are not canonical in the strict sense, nor has any theory of 'revelation' grown up in relation to them. Shintoism maintains that the natural man is in direct communion with the divine forces of nature, and does not feel the need for special documents authenticating a marked theophany or direct divine manifestation. The significance of this is seen in the exposition of Shinto by the native writer Genchi Kato, who points out that the religion is not 'theocratic' but 'theanthropic,' 'a man's being in a

special relation with the Divine may mean a man's complete union or oneness with the Divine, here we find the complete union of divinity and humanity.<sup>1</sup> The climax of such a faith is the worship of the Emperor as the representative of the nation, the symbol of the complete union of all men with the divine. It is not easy to distinguish such a worship from a special form of humanitarianism, and, in reference to the state worship, Kato mentions the view 'that it is not a religion at all, but is, rather, a repertory of state ceremonials and national morality or ethics.' State Shinto to-day is held by the government to be only a form of national patriotism as distinct from the religious movements of sectarian Shinto.

Shintoism does, however, possess a word for direct divine inspiration, viz., *kangakari*, meaning God attachment or possession, but it is not used of inspiration in relation to the canonical literature. It refers to the occasional inspiration of seers who utter, in the name of a shrine deity, an oracular communication, complaining perhaps of religious neglect or giving instructions for the erection of a new shrine. Inspired communications of this kind are mentioned in the sacred texts.

(ii) *Confucianism*—associated with a belief in indirect revelation

The sacred documents of Confucianism are, like those of Shinto, naturalistic records. They are referred to as ordinary human compilations, but are sacred because they record the example of religious-minded men of the past and deal with the ideal life.

<sup>1</sup> *A Study of Shinto*, p. 5.

Their religious status may be said to arise mainly from the belief taught in them that God raises up virtuous men as models to the people at large.

By Confucianism is meant the State religion of ancient China deepened in its conviction of the moral sway of Heaven through the life and teaching of Confucius. It was held that God (Shang-ti or T'ien) revealed his will to the nation either through righteous rulers or virtuous sages. 'Heaven having given life to men, raised up princes to rule them, and teachers to instruct them' (Book of Odes). 'There is no theory of direct 'revelation.' The monarch or superior man is not conscious of the divine presence in the human soul, but may feel in a general or indirect way that God has raised him up. By following the moral code and performing the correct rites, especially divination and ancestor worship, rulers became models to men and reflected in their deeds the way of Heaven.

Likewise the sacred books of Confucianism do not claim to have been written under the influence of direct inspiration, but owe their authority mainly to their connection with sages or holy men (*Sheng-jên*) or because of their teaching on the superior man (*Chun-tze*).

The Book of Records, for example, opens with an account of the monarchs Yaou and Shun who, according to Confucius, had in the remote past attained the ideal of the perfect sage. The sacred literature was therefore called *Sheng-Ching* as emanating from or recounting the examples of *Sheng-jên* who lived in conformity with the will of Heaven.

The books comprising this literature are his-

torical, poetical and moralistic. As commonly received, the Confucian Canon consists of five Classics (*Ching*) and four Books. The word *Ching* means the warp of a web, and signifies 'what is invariable,' 'a rule,' i.e., canonical, as teaching the rule of correct living.

The five Classics have gained in sanctity on account of their antiquity. Four are reputed to have been edited by Confucius, and one is mainly, if not entirely, his own work ('Spring and Autumn') They are named 'The Book of Records' (*Shu Ching*), 'The Book of Odes' (*Shih Ching*), 'Notes on Manners' or 'Book of Rites' (*Li Chi*), 'The Book of Changes' (*Yi Ching*) and the 'Spring and Autumn Annals' (*Ch'un Ch'iu*).<sup>1</sup>

The 'Book of Records' (also known as the 'Book of History') was edited by Confucius in such a way as to emphasize the worthy deeds and lofty admonitions of wise counsellors and the downfall of faithless rulers. We do not know, however, how the Records left the hands of Confucius because in the third century B.C. the tyrant Ch'in Shih Huang Ti burnt the ancient records, in order to silence criticism levelled against him from these authorities, and it is not easy to test the genuineness of the fragments since recovered—fifty-eight sections as against the hundred sections said to have been redacted by Confucius.

The 'Book of Odes' was arranged by Confucius to illustrate the manners and customs of the past. The musical accompaniments to the Odes also had, in his opinion, a high educational value. They consisted of folk songs, 'art songs,' and religious

<sup>1</sup> S.E.E., Vols. III, XVI, XXVII, XXVIII.

hymns used at sacrificial feasts. The simple customs of the ancient people who composed the folk songs were allegorized for the purposes of ethical instruction. The authenticity of the 'Book of Odes,' as it has come down to us, is accepted unanimously by Chinese scholars, in contrast with the precarious reliability of the 'Book of Records.'

The position is, however, not so clear with regard to the 'Book of Rites,' which is only loosely related to the original classic as it left the Master's hand. Its contents are a condensation of earlier material, containing the correct rules of behaviour for every department of life, private and public, including the ritual of worship.

'The Book of Changes' is a strange compilation, professing to educe information of a speculative and ethical character from combinations, of broken and unbroken lines (—) in sets of six ('hexagrams'). For example, in the interpretation of the Khien Hexagram of Chapter XV we are told that the broken line (—) stands for the superior man who adds humility to humility, and that the unbroken line (—) represents the superior man of acknowledged merit. The origin of the lines is thought to have been either primitive knotted cords or the yarrow stalks used in divination. As a book of divination it escaped the destructive fury of Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, but its original form is obscure.

The only book said to have been compiled by Confucius is the 'Spring and Autumn Annals.' It is a brief prosaic account of the events of Lu, Confucius' native state; and probably contains the official annals so altered by the great teacher that the treatise became a 'mirror for princes.' For

example, in the narratives of regicides, such a word as 'killed' would mean that the king received a just punishment, whereas the word 'murdered' would imply the guilt of one who slew a monarch unjustly, or perhaps of a minister who failed to bring a murderer to justice. Mencius tells us that this outline of events, so altered, became a powerful influence for good in the case of unfilial sons and treacherous officials.

In addition to these five major Classics there are the four Books of more recent date. They are of great influence, though they do not possess quite the sanctity attributed to the earlier Ching.

The four Books are the 'Sayings of Confucius' (*Lun Yü*), 'The Great Learning' (*Ta Hsüeh*), 'Measure and Mean' (*Chung Yung*) and 'Mencius.' The first and third are also known as 'The Analects' and 'The Doctrine of the Mean' from Professor Legge's pioneer translations.

The 'Sayings of Confucius' were probably compiled by the second generation of his disciples, but they contain the most reliable information available on the Master's teaching.

The 'Great Learning' and 'Doctrine of the Mean' are ethical treatises of a slightly later date. The latter is ascribed to Tze Sze, the grandson of Confucius. Its title *Chung Yung* (central-common) implies that the central or balanced attitude of mind should become the common practice of daily life. 'Mencius' is the teaching of the great Confucian sage of that name who helped to popularize the doctrine of his Master.

Confucianism emphasizes the natural goodness of man for 'the great God has conferred even on the

inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right' (Book of Records).<sup>1</sup> Men need, however, the example of good kings and teachers who have developed their moral sense to a supreme degree. Hence the help of Scriptures recounting the acts and principles of sages and superior men. These Scriptures were compiled to exemplify the character of princely or superior men who 'revered and honoured the path prescribed by Heaven.'<sup>2</sup>

The will of Heaven was also discovered, in special circumstances, by:—

(1) Divination—'the great precious tortoise-shell . . . the intelligence of Heaven.'<sup>3</sup> Divination was carried out by deciphering the cracks on the surface of a heated tortoise-shell or by the throwing of yarrow stalks.

(2) The will of the nobles or people, whose support not only strengthened the imperial will, but was regarded as of divine authority. If an Emperor failed to rule righteously rebellion against him might even be justified as a decree of Heaven, if the nobles were supported by the people (*vox populi vox dei*) and were confirmed in their purpose by divination.

(3) Natural phenomena—'orderliness' was 'exemplified by seasonable sunshine,' the wrath of Heaven on evil was known by pestilence or other natural calamity.

Direct inspiration is not mentioned except in isolated passages such as in the narrative of Wû-ting (Book of Records), who, fearing that his virtue was not equal to that of his predecessors, appointed Yüeh

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E., III, pp. 89-90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.



his prime minister, as the result of a dream from God.

To sum up the Confucian standpoint, the documents are regarded as human productions, having revelation value because of the belief they maintain that God, in a general and indirect way, raises up rulers and sages to lead and teach the people aright.

(iii) *Buddhism and Taoism*—associated with a belief in mystic sympathy with the universe

The religious documents of primitive Buddhism and Taoism are also naturalistic records giving an account of the teaching of their founders and are regarded as sacred, in the first place, because of their subject matter.

The literature of Buddhism, as it has come down to modern times, is much later than the age of the founder, and we cannot, therefore, be sure how far it presents his original teaching. The Pali literature of Ceylon claims to give this message in its purity, but as the Canon was not finally put into writing till about 80 B.C., some four hundred years after Buddha's death, the accuracy of the records is not beyond question. The crystallization of the oral tradition into wearisome formulae gives the impression of degeneration. The documents emanate from the monasteries and Mrs. Rhys Davids thinks that the monks have misinterpreted the teaching of Buddha by their negative monastic ethic. But at present, higher criticism has not gone far enough for a definite judgment to be pronounced as to the character of any possible declension from the original teaching. As they have come down to us the Pali documents are held in reverence because

they claim to give the way of life taught by Gautama Buddha.

The idea of inspiration applies to the 'enlightenment' of Gautama, not to any theory as to the origin of the documents themselves. This enlightenment was the highest moment in a mystic experience in which Gautama was convinced that he had wrested from the universe its eternal secret. Hence the religious name 'Buddha' from the Sanscrit *budh* 'to have an insight into' or 'to receive illumination.'

Our individual existence, according to the Pali tradition, is inevitably a life of suffering, because it involves unsatisfied craving, but there is a way out of this suffering by a special path of mental and moral discipline, leading to a supernormal state of mystic contemplation (*samādhi*). The culmination of this experience is a state (*nirvana*) superior even to that of the gods, for they are also subject to the law of suffering, reaping only a temporary reward in heaven for good deeds performed in an earlier existence. Rather than a 'revelation' from the gods, Buddha felt that he had discovered a truth to which both gods and men were, in the nature of things, bound to submit. Buddha also held that man could only gain peace by mental effort within the life process itself, not by the help of a divine being, transcending or external to the life-stream of becoming (*bhavya*). And yet Buddha, according to the records, was sure that he had made a discovery which was more than a human philosophy (*darsana*); he had learned from the universe its law or *dharma*. This conviction came to him through a mystic experience, which was not unrelated to the Hindu

Yoga method of inducing a supernormal state. But whereas Yoga is an intensive introspective 'meditation,' the Buddhist *jhāna* is a state in which the consciousness is so clarified of earthly content that it can receive supernormal experience from higher planes of reality. In *jhāna* the experience is as that of 'a man who at night puts out the light in his room, that he may the better from his window look out for what stars it may then become the more possible for him to see.'<sup>1</sup> In such a state it is believed that the highest truth can be won by an intuitive discovery and apprehension of the universal law or *dharma* governing human development. In some such state Gautama became Buddha, the 'illuminated' or 'inspired' one.

Gautama was not only a mystic but also an extremely practical teacher, and the application of his discovery to the needs of daily life found expression in an oral tradition which eventually took the form of a canonical literature. This is the Pali literature mentioned above, which took shape, according to tradition, at the Councils of Rajagriha (c. 477 B.C.) and Vaisali (c. 377 B.C.). The primary tradition in the Māgadhī dialect is unfortunately lost.

There is no theory of 'revelation' in relation to these documents. They are revered only as the primary sources of Buddhism, handing down, according to the tradition of the monasteries, the teaching of their revered Master.

This Pali canon is called *Tipitaka* (Sans. *Tripitaka*) or 'three baskets.' The word 'basket' is used in the sense of a tradition handed down in a

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rhys Davids, *The Birth of Indian Psychology*, p. 335.

'receptacle.' The *Vinaya pitaka* or 'Discipline basket' deals with the Order of mendicant recluses and its disciplinary methods. The *Sutta pitaka* or 'Discourse basket' contains the moral and religious teaching of Buddha. The third basket, the *Abhidhamma*, the 'Intensive treatment of the Dhamma' (Sans. *dharma*) gives the teaching in greater detail as the result of further discussion. Buddhist worship was centred round the office of mutual confession of offences and in the *Vinaya Pitaka* appears the important document, called the *Patimokkha* ('Disburdenment')—a list of offences 'disburdened' at the monastic service.<sup>1</sup> The second basket is somewhat arbitrarily divided into sections (*Nikāyas*) according to length or other artificial grouping—comprising the *Digha* ('long'), *Majjhima* ('medium'), *Samyutta* ('grouped'), *Anguttara* ('classified') and *Khuddaka-Nikāyas* ('short'). The *Digha* contains 'The Sutta of the Great Decease,' being anecdotes on the life and teaching of the Buddha, the nearest of the *Suttas* in character to the Christian Gospels.<sup>2</sup> The so-called first sermon of Buddha to his five pioneer converts appears in the *Samyutta-Nikāya* translated by Professor Rhys Davids as 'The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness'.<sup>3</sup> The 'Footstep of the Law'<sup>4</sup> (*Dhammapada*) is a sacred gem of these *Suttas* (*Khuddaka-Nikāya*) and opens with the reminder that we are the fruit of our own thoughts, blessedness following the man who speaks or acts with a pure thought as a shadow that never leaves him.

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E., XIII.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XI.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XI.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, X.

The literature of Mahāyāna or developed Buddhism will be considered later under another heading.

The second example of a naturalistic record associated with the belief in mystic sympathy with the universe is that of the *Tao-teh-Ching* of Taoism, one of the three religions of China. Original Taoism maintains that the universe reveals its secret to the one who by a kind of peaceful receptivity allows nature to speak, so that its Tao or Way is learned by mystic sympathy. *The Tao-teh-Ching* ('The Treatise of the Way and Virtue')<sup>1</sup> is held to be sacred as emanating, according to tradition, from the hand of the founder Lao-tze himself. The Chinese historian Sse-ma Ch'ien ascribes the book to Lao-tze, an opinion followed by Dr. Legge and some modern scholars. Others, such as Lionel Giles, do not regard the book as the actual work of the founder, though it may contain substantially his teaching. Lao-tze does not seem to have passed through a spiritual crisis as did Buddha, and his teaching is a simple mysticism impressed by paradox. To be inspired is to be possessed of the eternal Tao, and in its power to achieve great ends without energy or strife. This individualistic mysticism did not appeal to the practically-minded Confucianists, and its later degeneration into a bizarre magic depreciated the value of the *Tao-teh-Ching* in the eyes of Confucianist scholars. Hence the *Tao-teh-Ching* was not regarded as canonical by the State religion. It had, however, a brief spell of notoriety as a Classic under the Emperor Ching-ti (156-140 B.C.). The writings of Chuang-tze, who carried on

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E., XXXIX.

the founder's teaching, are also held in honour by the Taoists.

The *Tao-teh-Ching* owes its authority to its reputed authorship and teaching, not to any theory of inspiration behind the writing itself. Taoism insists on the immediacy and spontaneity of Tao as it works on the human heart, and scorns Confucianism as a book religion relying on the records of the sages and the ethical teaching of Confucius. The true Taoist waits, in a quiet receptive spirit, for the mystic Tao to act spontaneously upon him. Tao as the immanent Cause of all things, the 'mother' of the universe, is conceived in one passage as anterior to God (Ti), the deity of conventional religion, so that 'revelation,' as in primitive Buddhism, does not mean a message from a personal Supreme Being, but an intuitive apprehension of Reality.

(b) RECORDS TREATED AS REVELATION BY A LATER AGE

(i) *Hinduism (Upanishads)*—associated with a belief in mystic sympathy with the universe.

The Hindu *Upanishads* find a place at this stage because of the belief maintained by them that man realizes his end by the identification of his true self (*ātman*) with the self or Supreme Spirit (*Brāhman*) of the universe. They were originally the productions of various teachers in ancient India, who were questioning yet older paths, and making fresh ones for the guidance of man. These older paths were made by the earlier *Vedas* and their attendant *Brāhmanas* or priestly documents, to be considered later.<sup>1</sup> Eventually the *Upanishads* were tacked on

<sup>1</sup> *Brāhman*-a=priest or priestly document ; *Brāhman*=world spirit.

to the *Vedas* and *Brāhmanas*, all of them forming together a complete 'revelation,' and the whole—*Vedas*, *Brāhmanas* and *Upanishads*—were regarded as *srūti* or 'heard' from a higher world. This corpus of documents came to be termed *Vedas* in a wider sense, meaning 'Vedas and their interpretation.'

The theory of objective 'revelation', developed in relation to these documents, will be dealt with when dealing with the *Vedas* as a whole. At the moment we shall consider the *Upanishads*, the teaching of which is quite distinctive from that of the earlier documents. Whereas the original *Vedas* maintained an anthropomorphic nature worship, and the *Brāhmanas* upheld a magical theory of sacrifice, the *Upanishads* rose to the belief that by an immediate intuitive experience man could become aware of the oneness of his soul (*ātman*) with the World-Soul (*Brāhman*). The *Upanishads* teach, therefore, a form of inspiration as due to mystic sympathy with the universe, or, to be more correct, with the Self-subsistent Spirit immanent within the universe. Ultimately, however, nothing exists but *Brāhman*, so that individual existence apart from this Supreme Reality has only relative being. One *Upanishad* (*Svetāsvatara*) indeed, holds that individual existence is illusion (*māyā*), for *Brāhman* alone is Real.

The theology of Sancara (c. eighth century A.D.), the greatest of India's scholastics, expounds this teaching of the mystic apprehension of Reality with a wealth of detail. He does not regard it as a revelation from a personal God to individual persons, because ultimately the idea of individual personality, whether applied to man or the Supreme Being is illusion. But the highest experience is a

‘revelation’; it is not a discovery or apprehension of the mind (*manas*), but a ‘revelation’ from ‘beyond’ human thought, the universal Brāhman making itself known intuitively as the spirit in the breast.

The word *Upanishad* is derived from two roots signifying ‘to sit near,’ i.e., the sessions of the student close to his spiritual teacher. In the body of the *Upanishads* the word comes to mean ‘mystic teachings.’ Hindu scholars give the meaning of the word as ‘setting at rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit.’

The approximate date of the oldest *Upanishads* seems to be the period 600–500 B.C. before the rise of Buddhism. The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya Upanishads* are the two chief of these documents, belonging to the early period, but all are important for understanding the development of Upanishad monism.

(ii) *Hinduism (Vedas)*—the words inherently divine

As part of the Vedic literature of India the *Upanishads* came to be regarded as ‘objectively inspired,’ word for word from Heaven. This literature comprises the *Vedas*, directly so-called, and the documents of various schools appended to them, the *Brāhmanas*, and *Upanishads*.

None of these documents was originally regarded as direct revelation, as were, for example, the sacred books of Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Islam. They contained no burning message from God to man as did the original documents of the latter three religions. The earliest of the *Vedas* (the *Rig-Veda*) is the most ancient source of Hinduism and contains hymns in honour of nature deities composed



somewhere between 1,000 and 800 B.C. The gods they honoured were indeed called in a general way 'the inspirers of song,' but it was not till a later age that the writers (*rishis* or seers) were credited with a divinely revealed knowledge, as part of a great sacrificial ritual.

The Brāhmans or priests used the hymns as magical chants and in virtue of their spiritual power the words were regarded as inherently divine and eternal, seen by ancient *rishis* written across the heavens or heard by them. Hence the hymns were called *srūti* 'heard' or objectively 'revealed.' The belief in 'direct revelation' arose therefore in the age of the *Brāhmanas* or priestly documents (c. 700 B.C.).

The hymns were arranged by the Brāhmans in liturgical form, for it was their use in sacrifice which was all important. There was the *Rig-Veda* or Praise Veda for the sacrificing priest, the *Sāma-Veda* or Chant Veda for the Chanting priest, and the *Yajur-Veda* or Formula Veda containing formulae to be mumbled by the working priest. A fourth *Veda* was later added (the *Atharva-Veda*), containing spells for counteracting misfortune. The word *Veda* means 'Knowledge' (cognate with Greek *oîda* and Latin *vidēre*), i.e., divine knowledge. But these compositions were divine, in the belief of the Brāhmans, not primarily because of their meaning or message, but because of the spiritual power they wielded, when used as incantations in worship. Thus the idea of 'direct revelation' implied 'immediate revealing power.' Hence the texts were called *māntras* (from *man* 'to think') or 'instruments of thought.' Magical power resided

in the words as 'thought' and 'uttered,' not as 'written.' They were, therefore, just as powerful when orally handed down by the priests as wonder-working incantations long before they were committed to writing. The word *Veda* was, in the first instance, applied to the four collections of *Rig-*, *Sāma-*, *Yājur-*, and *Atharva-*, but, as we have seen, the *Brāhmanas* or priestly commentaries, and the *Upanishads* or religious philosophy were later added, as part of the *Veda*, so that all three (*Māntras*, *Brāhmanas*, and *Upanishads*) were classed together as *srūti* or revelation in distinction from *smṛiti* ('remembered'). The latter term was applied to the secondary literature recording 'tradition,' e.g., the *Dharma-Sūtras* (Law Books), the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* (Epics), and the *Pūranas* (Sectarian literature).

The words of the ancient *māntras* were very carefully preserved, for their efficacy in worship depended upon their being repeated as they originally sounded. So powerful were the utterances *per se*, that the idea of a divine revealer fell into the background, and the words themselves were held to be as such inherently divine and eternal. Hence it was maintained by the Karma Mīmāṃsa ('Work Inquiry'), the earliest of the six orthodox systems, that the *Veda* was not revealed by any personal revealer, and the word 'revelation' came to signify the inherent sanctity of the words, not the belief that they 'unveiled' for man anything of the divine nature and purpose.

In the opinion of the scholastic Sancara, however, the *Vedas* (as developed by the *Upanishads*) were self-evident revelation, and so the ultimate authority

for his religious system, viz., the monistic belief in the Self-existent Brāhman. Brāhman was not conceived in this system as personal, as in strictness the ancient Vedic deities were, so that 'revelation' for Sancara could not mean a message from heavenly beings. The later writer, Ramanuja (b. A.D. 1027), in opposition to Sancara, contended for the belief in a personal God who made himself known to man, but though Ramanuja makes an appeal to popular devotion, Sancara, on the whole, governs the higher thought of India.

Radhakrishnan, in his modern exposition of Hinduism, indicates the attitude of the Indian religious philosopher to-day towards these documents. The Vedic hymns attempt to explain the mysteries of the world, not by means of any super-human insight or extraordinary revelation, but by the light of unaided reason.<sup>1</sup> This is an easy step from the belief that behind the sacred literature there is no personal revealer.

(c) RECORDS ASSOCIATED WITH AN ORIGINAL CLAIM  
TO DIRECT REVELATION

(i) *Zoroastrianism—to a personal founder through the  
'Good Thought' of God.*

We have seen that the literature of primitive Buddhism, Taoism, and the Upanishads (as interpreted by the orthodox Sancara), do not allow for the belief in a divine Revealer who has personal relations with man. The supreme principles of Dharma, Tao and Brāhman are not personal. Dharma is the law of the universe, Tao its unseen

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, I, p. 71.

cause and essence, Brāhman its immanent spiritual reality.

On the other hand, the Confucian idea of God (the Supreme Ruler) and the Shinto idea of deity do allow room for the belief in divine personality. But in neither of these cases does divine personality rise clearly to the surface, and the belief in 'direct personal revelation' is absent. The religions we are now about to consider, viz., Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Muhammedanism depend explicitly on the belief that God has spoken directly to man, and the literature, as the vehicle of revelation, lays claim to direct inspiration. In each case God, whether as Ahura Mazdah, Yahweh, or Allah, is regarded as a personal Revealer transcending the natural order. In each case also we find a leader or leaders convinced that God by an immediate inspiration has given them a call—Zarathushtra, Moses, Isaiah or Muhammed. All would say with Amos, 'The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' In a sense, therefore, the three religions—Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Islam—can be regarded as 'prophetic' religion, in which the sacred literature is held to be 'objectively inspired' on the conviction that the Supreme Being has had direct converse with man.

The *Gāthas* of Zoroastrianism are believed to contain the 'revelations' and teaching of Zarathushtra.<sup>1</sup> His traditional date 660 to 583 B.C. is accepted by some scholars (e.g., Jackson) as substantially correct, though others (e.g., Moulton, Clemen) think that he lived far earlier, c. 1000 B.C. These *Gāthas* or Psalms consist of seventeen hymns

<sup>1</sup> Translated in Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, appendix.

(Yasnas 28-34, 43-51, and 53) embedded in a larger collection of *Yasnas* read at the solemn Yasna ceremony.

According to the *Gāthas* Zarathushtra is conscious of a call from God (Ahura Mazdah) to purify the religion of ancient Iran. 'As the holy one I recognized thee, Mazdah Ahura, when Good Thought came to me, when first by your words I was instructed' (Yasna XLIII, 11). 'Good Thought' is a quasi-personified attribute of the Supreme Being who bestows a gift of his own nature upon his servant.

Often Zarathushtra expresses his communion with God in dialogue form, Ahura speaks, then he speaks. Later Zoroastrian tradition holds that the Iranian seer had seven visions, the first of which came to him when he was thirty years of age, at a religious festival when 'Good Thought,' now conceived as an archangel, led him into the divine presence.

Zoroastrianism is a religion based on the belief in this divine revelation to mankind through Zarathushtra, who has been elevated to the rank of 'worshipful being,' accorded to no other man. The surviving *Gāthas* purport to give some of the *ipsissima verba* of that revelation, but according to Neryosangh (c. A.D. 1200) 'all the laws and deeds contained in the Avesta were revealed to Zoroaster in the *Gāthas*.'

The Avestan documents were preserved by their use in liturgical worship. The first group, liturgically arranged, contained the *Vendīdād*, *Visparad* and *Yasnas* (including the *Gāthas*), and the second group comprised the Minor Prayers and *Yashts* called the 'Small Avesta' for the use of the laity.

The historical order of the books seems to be (1) The *Gāthas*, (2) The *Gātha* of the Seven Chapters (*Yasnas* 35-42), (3) Metrical *Yasnas* and *Yashts* with portions of the *Visparad* and *Vendīdād*, (4) The remaining prose portions of the *Avesta*.<sup>1</sup> The *Yashts* are 'Songs of worship,' the word being derived from the same root as *Yasna*. The *Visparad* ('all the lords') is a collection of texts in honour of heavenly beings. The *Vendīdād* ('law against demons') is a priestly code containing penal and expiatory laws for purification from ritual evil.

Extensive portions of the *Avesta* were lost in the devastation wrought by Alexander the Great in 330 B.C., and attempts were made by rulers of the Sasanian dynasty (A.D. 226-641) to recover the texts, the final redaction being given canonical authority by Shāhpūhr II (309-380).

The sword of Khalid was even more destructive than that of the 'accursed Iskandar,' and the few remnants which survived the Muhammedan conquest are preserved to-day by the Parsis in India and a few Gabars in Persia. The earliest Parsi manuscripts are thirteenth and fourteenth century, while the Persian is seventeenth. The documents mentioned above—*Gāthas*, *Yasnas*, *Yashts*, *Visparad* and *Vendīdād*—are amongst the survivals.

There are also a number of secondary documents in the later Pahlavi (eighth to eleventh century A.D.) containing ancient material, which helps to fill in the gaps in the ancient *Avesta*, as well as indicating later developments. The *Dinkart* ('Acts of Religion')<sup>2</sup> and *Bundahish* ('Creation of the beginning')<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E., IV, XXIII, XXXI.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXVII.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, V.

are important examples of this literature appearing about the ninth century A.D. These have not the revelation value of the original Avesta. They are represented by the word *Zand* of the title *Zend-Avesta*, viz., 'revelation' (= *Avesta*) and 'commentary' (= *Zand*), mistakenly applied to the original Avesta. As in India, the belief developed later that the words themselves were magically powerful. This view must have had its roots in the past as the Hindu *māntra* is cognate with the Avestan *manthra*. But the belief in a 'revelation' from a personal deity was not ousted out of Zoroastrianism by magic as in the case of Hinduism.

(ii) *Judaism—through the personal inspiration of law-giver and prophet*

The Old Testament or Bible of the Jews is the supreme example of a literature based on the belief that God has spoken to man. Of its three sections: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, the first is, for Judaism, the high-water mark. God's revelation of His Will through the Law (*Torah*) is the summit of His self-manifestation; all else is subordinate to it. The Old Testament gave birth to the idea of prophecy as a central fact in religion, and, of all the prophets, Moses is, in the belief of Judaism, the chief. He it was to whom God spoke 'face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend' (Exodus xxxiii, 11), and through whom the Torah was given to Israel.

The canonization of the Old Testament was a gradual process, from about the time when Ben Sirach could speak of himself as the latest of the Biblical writers (c. B.C. 182) to the time of Josephus

(c. A.D. 37-95) who gave the marks of the canon as (1) containing divine doctrines of unquestioned authority, (2) distinguished from other literature as holy, (3) consisting of a definite number of books, and (4) having an inviolable verbal form.<sup>1</sup>

Owing to an emphasis on the divine transcendence it came to be held that the Law was mediated to man through angels (Jubilees I, 27; Josephus, Ant. XV, 5, 3). In the eyes of the Jew this only enhanced the dignity of the Law, though St. Paul saw it in another light (Galatians iii, 19).

The Articles of Belief of the scholastic theologian, Maimonides (1135-1204), assert that the Torah, as it has come down in the Bible, is the same as that which was given to Moses who 'was the chief of all the prophets' (Arts. 7 and 8), and also that the Law is the last word of God to man, neither will it be changed nor will any other Law be revealed by the Creator (Art. 9). The supreme prophetic office of Moses is inferred from Deuteronomy xxxiv, 10: 'there did not rise again a prophet like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face.' The Articles of Maimonides do not possess binding authority on Jewry, but express the prevailing belief of the orthodox. Maimonides also held that prophecy was a special gift of God vouchsafed to the few, the result of a special divine operation, and not merely the reward of holiness. This view maintains the uniqueness of revelation. Modern Liberal Judaism, however, 'is unable to hold that perfect and final truth can be enshrined in a book,'<sup>2</sup> and allows that

<sup>1</sup> Oesterley and Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Montefiore, *Liberal Judaism and Hellenism*, pp. 12 and 13.



God has suffered other aspects of truth to shine through other than Jewish windows. Morris Joseph's *Judaism as Creed and Life*, a compromise between strict orthodoxy and Liberal Judaism, regards the sacred literatures of other religions, even though they contain much that cannot be accepted, as a 'revelation of the Supreme' in so far as they teach the duty of goodness, and teach it in God's name.<sup>1</sup> Revelation is thus essentially the revelation of ethical truth. In addition, however, to conduct, the Jews maintain that the special treasure which God has imparted to them is the pure monotheism, which it is still the supreme mission of Judaism to present untarnished to the world.

In addition to the Bible there grew up a great deal of interpretive material or 'oral law' said to go back to the time of Moses, but which probably took rise in the exilic period. The culmination of this development appears in the writings that go by the name of the *Talmud* ('Teaching'). By the time of our Lord the Pharisees had distinguished two kinds of teaching, the preceptive or *Halākhā* ('rule of practice') and non-preceptive or *Haggādā* ('narrative'). The former was mainly legal and ritual, the latter spiritual and homiletic. *Haggādā* was not binding as was *Halākhā*, 'the tradition of the Elders' of Mark vii, 3. It was some time before this material was set down in writing, for the Bible as the revealed Book *par excellence* could not permit any other writing to approach it, and it is even questioned whether the chief corpus of this 'oral law' the Mishnah of Rabbi Jehuda Hannasi (c. A.D. 200) was originally written down or not.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

The *Mishnah* (or 'Repetition'), as the main depository of the oral law, needing constant repetition to memorize, stood in contrast with Scripture (*Mikra*, 'Reading'). Out of the *Mishnah* grew the Palestinian and Babylonian *Talmuds* (c. A.D. 500), explaining and interpreting it, adding also fresh material as altered circumstances required. Owing to persecution in Palestine the Babylonian *Talmud* gained precedence of the two.

The authority of tradition was contested by the Sadducees in the time of our Lord, and by the sect of the Karaites later, but orthodox Judaism has held that this explicatory material is authoritative and prevents Judaism from becoming a stereotyped system. By the time of our Lord, however, it seems that the ritual tradition had already become binding and unalterable, and a burden by its very copiousness.

Christianity on the whole sees the high-water mark of Old Testament revelation in the eighth and seventh century prophets, with their burning message of ethical monotheism and denunciation of sin. Other religions may bear marks of the prophetic method, but here it is held is prophecy of a unique kind. The experience of the prophets is unparalleled in the history of religion. It is the experience of a series of men, diverse in character but one in their conviction of the unity and moral holiness of God, derived from the sense of a direct divine call, with a courageous practical application of the message they received. 'The Lord took me from following the flock and said, Go, prophesy' (Amos vii, 15). 'I truly am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to

declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin ' (Micah iii, 8).

(iii) *Islam—to a personal founder by an angelic messenger*

The *Qur'an*, the ultimate authority for Islam, is also held by the Muhammedan to be a direct personal revelation from God. Muhammed (A.D. 570–632) was convinced that God (Allah) had spoken to him through the mediation of the angel Gabriel. The revelation came to him in Arabic from the Maternal or Archetypal Book in Heaven (*Ummu'l Kitab*). 'Thus then' (reads Sura XIII, 39) 'as a code in the Arabic tongue have we sent down the *Qur'an* . . . what He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm, for with him is the source of revelation' (lit., 'Mother of the Book'). Muhammed claimed that the *Qur'an* both as literature and in its teaching, was an outstanding miracle and challenged his contemporaries to produce its equal. Until the rise of the rationalist school of Mutazilites (eighth century), the eternal character of the Sacred Book was not questioned. The orthodox (Sunnis) still regard the *Qur'an* as literally inspired, having its eternal prototype in Heaven either in the sense that (a) the very Arabic words are eternal or (b) the 'spiritual word' in the mind of God is the counterpart of the earthly writing as actually revealed. The effect of the belief that every word was 'communicated to the prophet by an audible voice' (Ibn Khaldūn) is an extreme doctrine of verbal inspiration, in which no room is allowed for a human, as well as the divine side, to inspiration. Muhammed, according to the orthodox view, received all the

words in a mechanical way, they are Allah's, not the expression by Muhammed of his divinely inspired thoughts. The Mutazilite school, however (which is in the minority) denies the belief in the eternity of the *Qur'an*, maintaining indeed that the teaching is eternal, but that the language is Muhammed's own.

Muslim theology designates the inspiration of the founder *wahi* or, more explicitly, *wahi zahir*, 'external inspiration' in distinction from *ilham* or 'general inspiration.' *Wahi zahir* is only applied to Quranic inspiration and to revelation granted to earlier prophets than Muhammed, such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus, but *ilham* or general inspiration is applied to any saint or even to Muhammed when not actually uttering a 'revelation.' The expression *wahi zahir* emphasizes (1) that a message has been received from a transcendent source and (2) that the very words of the revelation are the words of God. The lesser inspiration of *ilham* is also due to transcendent guidance, but the prophet or saint under its influence delivers his own subject matter, and in his own words.

The earliest Suras or Chapters (lit., 'courses of bricks') of the *Qur'an* poetical in style and urgent in their appeal, bear the imprint of a prophet with a divine message, but later Suras suggest an acute administrator enacting laws and lesser rulings as 'revelation' to suit changing circumstances, or to justify his own inconsistent conduct. In order to avoid the opinion that an earlier outgrown Sura was merely a human enactment, the doctrine of abrogation was put forward by which it was held that God allowed a new Sura to revoke one He had already revealed. 'Whatever verses we cancel or

cause thee to forget, We give thee a better in their stead, or the like thereof. Knowest thou not that God hath power over all things' (Sura II, 100).

The assertion that Jews and Christians shall have their reward with God by virtue of their own religion is abrogated by the further 'revelation' that the followers of any other religion than Islam shall perish in their belief. The early Sura, when Muhammed was friendly with the Jews, allowing the worshipper to pray towards Jerusalem is also rescinded by the later Sura that prayer must be said facing the Holy Temple of Mecca—the Qibla of Islam. Concerning the prophet's own private life the statement that he is not permitted to take any further wives is abrogated by the passage allowing him peculiar privileges above the rest of the faithful.

The *Qur'an* makes reference to the earlier revelations of the Old Testament—the Law, the Psalms, Prophecy and Wisdom—and to the Gospel or Injil of Jesus. Though these earlier revelations are superseded they are regarded as true revelations for their particular age, but Muhammedanism affirms that the Christian Gospels, which teach that Christ is divine, are a later fabrication of the original Injil or Gospel in which He is not divine but only a prophet. Muslim theologians support their contention to-day by reference to primitive Ebionism which denied the divinity of Christ.

Most Islamic scholars regard the *Qur'an* as actually abrogating the Bible, though it seems that the earliest Muhammedan divines did not hold this view. Muhammed had, in spite of his opposition to Judaism and Christianity, at least retained the belief in earlier revelation as part of God's plan, and

maintained that the last revelation of the *Qur'an* fulfilled the earlier. 'In truth He hath sent down to thee the *Qur'an* which confirmeth those which precede it. For He hath sent down the Law and the Evangel aforetime as man's Guidance.' (Sura III, 2.) But the teaching of the *Qur'an* is fundamentally inconsistent with the Biblical Revelation and, the last word, that it abrogates the Bible is really the logical conclusion of Muhammed's teaching.

As regards the sources of the *Qur'an* the influence of the Old Testament, the Talmud, the Canonical and Apocryphal Gospels, and Zoroastrian beliefs can be clearly traced. Of the Old and New Testament, Muhammed's knowledge was apparently oral, and it is evident that he could not distinguish between canonical, apocryphal, legendary or heretical material. His view of the Divine Trinity as God, Mary and Jesus, is one of the well-known evidences of this confusion.

#### (d) RECORDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BELIEF IN A PERSONAL THEOPHANY

##### (i) *Hinduism—by divine descents*

The word *avatar* or 'descent' of a deity from Heaven to earth, sometimes used in the West to express a 'divine theophany,' hails from the Sanscrit of ancient India, and refers primarily to the appearances on earth of the god Vishnu in ten principal forms, viz., fish, tortoise, boar, man-lion, dwarf, Parasu-Rama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. The two *avatars* of living importance for Hinduism are those of Vishnu as Krishna and Rama. They were originally heroes whose activities are narrated

in the Indian epics, the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*. The *Mahābhārata* (Wars of the Great Bhārata Family), ascribed to the poet Vyasa, is in the unanimous opinion of scholarship, a composite work, of which the earliest portions (c. 400–200 B.C.) represent Krishna as a Rajput prince, and the later interpolated portion, the *Bhagavad Gita* (the Lord's Song), written early in the Christian era, idealizes Krishna as an *avatar* or descent of the Supreme Vishnu in human form. The word 'incarnation' is often used as a translation of the term *avatar* but, in view of its mythological associations, as fish or boar, and of the true meaning of the word as 'descent,' this latter term better translates the Sanscrit. The *Bhagavad Gita* maintains the belief that, when man is in difficulty, God descends to earth in human form to help him. Arjuna longing apparently for divine intercourse, and troubled by a problem of conscience, whether he ought to slay his kith and kin in fratricidal strife, has his doubts put to rest by the appearance of Krishna as his divine charioteer. The answer came, in the belief of the Hindu, as a personal revelation from Heaven.

The Gita has become a very popular book of devotion on account of its teaching that by loving confidence (*bhakti*) in Krishna, as a personal God, the worshipper can be released from the chain of *karma* and rebirth and attain absolute joy in union with Him. The divine descent was made, not in order to shew Arjuna the perfect life of God in human form, but to deliver a message in solution of a particular difficulty in eighteen cantos. According to Hindu theology a descent may take place at any particular time, as man needs it :—

For whensoever the Law fails and lawlessness  
uprises, O thou of Bhārata's race, then do I  
bring myself to bodied birth.

To guard the righteous, to destroy evil-doers, to  
establish the Law, I come into birth from age  
to age. (Gita IV, 7 and 8.)

The *Rāmāyana* (Adventures of Rāma) records the *avatar* of Rāma. Its original form (Books II to VI) was, in the main, the work of the poet Valmiki (c. 400 B.C.), but Books I and VII are later additions reaching into the second century A.D. The original Rāma of Valmiki was the eldest son of King Dasaratha of Ayodhya who was deprived of his kingdom through the jealousy of his step-mother, and banished unwillingly by his father into the forests, accompanied by his faithful wife Sita. Rāma of the later portions has developed into an *avatar* of Vishnu who, according to the poet, went voluntarily into privation and suffering for the good of mankind. 'Sorrow and suffering, trial and endurance, are a part of the Hindu ideal of a Perfect Life of righteousness.'<sup>1</sup> Rāma appeared as man, not to reveal the fulness of the divine nature, nor to deliver a verbal message, but to live the life that inspired the Hindu with a deeper sense of the significance of suffering. Like the Gita the *Rāmāyana* has become a religious treasure of spiritual devotion, because of this exemplification of the divine-human figure Rāma. The translation into Hindi by the poet Tulsi Das has had a profound influence on the inhabitants of the United Provinces.

The documents recording the *avatars* of Krishna and Rāma are not regarded by Brahmanic authority

<sup>1</sup> Dutt, *The Ramayana and Mahabharata*, p. 187.



as *srūti* or 'revelation.' They are *smṛiti* or 'tradition.' But for the Vishnuite sects, which became an integral part of Hinduism, the influence of these sacred documents was paramount. The Saivite sects, forming the other great section of Hinduism, also held that the god Siva manifested himself to his disciples, but there is no *avatar* doctrine, or any formative belief in a theophany connected with this deity such as appears in Vishnuism.

(e) RECORDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BELIEF IN A  
DIVINE PERSONAL OR RATIONAL MANIFESTATION

(i) *Buddhism (Mahāyāna)*—on higher planes of Reality

We have seen that primitive, or, as it has been called, Hīnayāna Buddhism taught that Buddha was enlightened by an intuitive apprehension of universal law (*dharma*) in a supernormal mystic experience. According to this early school, Buddha, or any who was enlightened like him, attained *nirvana*, and, so far as this world was concerned, their individuality and suffering came to an end. Mahāyāna (The Great Vehicle) or advanced Buddhism developed a doctrine of the Buddha as the Absolute or Supreme Reality of the universe. In this supreme form the Buddha is beyond knowledge (*Bhutatathata* 'suchness') and eternal. But the Absolute could manifest itself (1) as truth to the purest of mankind on the lower plane of pure reason, (2) as bliss to others on the yet lower plane of the imagination, and (3) as a human being to others on the lowest plane of sense. These planes were called 'bodies' (*kāya*). The eternal Buddha could appear as man in a transformation body of

sense (*nirmānakāya*), as a spiritual being in the sublimer body of bliss (*sambhogakāya*), or as truth in the highest norm or law body (*dharmakāya*).

The Mahāyāna, as a whole, looked down on Hīnayāna or primitive Buddhism as teaching the manifestation on the sense-plane only, the Gautama of history. The philosophical sects such as the Kegon and Tendai taught the way of self-help (*shodomen*) through pure reason, which could attain to a certain knowledge of the Absolute Buddha on the plane of the *dharmakāya*, or pure reason. The later magical sect of the Shingon also claimed that Vairochana Buddha revealed divine knowledge on this highest plane of the *dharmakāya*. The *Prajna-Paramita* ('transcendental knowledge') or 'Diamond Cutter Sutra,' is one of the most revered of documents of the philosophical sects. It is not an 'inspired' book, but authoritative because of its teaching on the Absolute as *sunyata* ('void'), i.e., unknowable.

As a reaction against this hard way of philosophy or pure thought, there arose out of the Tendai sect the Jodo or Pure Land sects which maintained the way of reliance on another (*jodomen*). This 'other' is the manifestation of the Absolute by a Buddha<sup>1</sup> on the plane of *sambhogakāya*, as a spiritual personal being, to the imagination of an aspirant for holiness. The chief Buddha honoured by the Jodo sect is Amitābha or Amida Buddha.

The Pure Land sects, therefore, taught that the Buddha could appear to man on the plane of the imagination, as a compassionate Father. The

<sup>1</sup>Also called a *bodhisattva* (being of enlightenment), which state any enlightened man could reach.

*Saddharma Pundarika* or 'Lotus of the True Law' is an important document of these sects. It represents Sakyamuni Buddha as a Being existing from eternity (*anādi*) who never really entered *nirvana*, but 'showed an earthly death merely for the benefit of sentient beings.' He still lives in a supersensible sphere and, far from being extinguished in *nirvana*, is represented as transcending the sphere of space and time, revealing Himself as 'the Father of all worlds . . . born in the world to save all living creatures.'

The *Lotus* belongs to the same line of development as the *avatar* theories of Hinduism, though it virtually teaches the belief in the manifestation of Buddha on a higher plane than that of the human. The date of the *Lotus* is, therefore, about the same time as that of the *Gita*. In early poetical form it probably appeared in the beginning of the first century A.D., being elaborated later in the second. It found a more congenial home in the Far East and was translated into Chinese by the beginning of the third century.

Other sacred books of the Pure Land sects are the *Sukhāvatī-vyūha* (there are two, the 'Greater' and 'Smaller') which teach that men can be reborn in the Western Paradise (*Sukhāvatī*, 'happy land') by faith on Amitābha Buddha, a personal Buddha who heeds the invocation of his worshippers. These books were translated into Chinese in the second and fifth centuries A.D. respectively. The *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* ('meditation on Buddha Amitāyus') is another of these Mahāyāna documents, according to which admission to the Western Paradise can be obtained by meditation.

Lives of the Buddha embellished by miraculous details were also held in reverence by the Mahāyāna sects, the chief of which were the *Buddha-carita* of Asvagosha and the *Lalita-vistara*. The sacred writings of the Greater Vehicle are legion and no Buddhist ever thinks of studying them all, different sects basing their main teaching on a selected few.

The documents of the Pure Land sects or Paradise Sutras have probably had the greatest influence in the Far East. Amida or Amitābha Buddha, it is maintained, reveals himself to man in his body of bliss magically radiated to the human imagination. It is important, however, to observe what kind of being reveals himself in this way.

(1) According to the Buddhist account he was once a monk who, in earlier births, devoted himself whole-heartedly to the religious life, and attained so much merit, that he became a *bodhisattva* ('a being of enlightenment'), and as such can transfer his merit to any who call on him in faith. *Ex hypothesi* any man can become a *bodhisattva*. Amida's nature is not unique, or inherently divine—in contrast with the human. Such an idea has no meaning for philosophical Buddhism.

(2) Yet, according to the *Lotus*, he is eternal. The philosophical sects, who revere this document, interpret this to mean that, having attained to pure being, Amitābha Buddha is identified with the eternal Absolute. As such he is eternal, and can step down on to a lower plane to appear as a personal being to the human imagination, though ultimately the Absolute with which he is identified is not personal. The Pure Land sects assert, on the other hand, that the manifestation of the Buddha as

personal is proof that the Absolute itself is in some sense personal, even though it is not like the individual personality of a limited human being on the plane of sense.

(3) The normal Buddhist, however, worships Amida as an immortal deity, different in nature from man, though, on a strict interpretation, he is a mortal who has attained the supreme state potentially attainable by all men.

Revelation for Mahāyāna Buddhism really means the 'revelation' of what all men can be or become, viz., 'enlightened ones,' able in their turn to enlighten others.

With regard to the sanctity of the texts there was a growing reverence for Scriptures foreign to the attitude of primitive Buddhism. But there is no theory of 'revelation' connected with the documents themselves. They are sacred because they are associated with the belief in a divine 'rational' or 'personal' manifestation of the Supreme Buddha to the reason or imagination of man.

The reverence for Scripture reached its high-water mark in the Nichiren sect of Japan (A.D. 1253), which paid homage to the *Lotus Sutra* indistinguishable from 'bibliolatry.'

(f) SACRED RECORD WITH AN ORIGINAL CLAIM TO DIRECT REVELATION AND INVOLVING THE BELIEF IN A SUPREME REVELATION BY DIVINE INCARNATION—  
CHRISTIANITY

Christianity shares with Judaism part of her sacred literature, maintaining with that faith the conviction that the Old Testament is the revealed Word of God, but adding the New Testament as

the climax of that revelation, already indicated by the Messianic expectation of the ancient Hebrews. The culmination of the Revelation is the incarnate life of the Son of God, who still lives in Heaven to bestow upon man the power of the Holy Spirit. 'God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son whom He appointed heir of all things' (Hebrews i, 1 and 2). The Incarnation of the Son of God, and the ever-living presence of His Spirit in the Church is, according to Christian theology, the summit of all revelation—Revelation in an absolute sense. Like Zoroastrianism and Islam, as well as Judaism, Christianity maintains the conviction of a direct personal revelation, a self-disclosure of God, to great prophetic souls, but, in distinction from the belief in a prophetic revelation to man through a man, there is the conviction that in Christ, truly Man and truly God, 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Colossians ii, 9). Christ was not merely the founder of a religion, or a teacher or prophet, but 'God in flesh' revealing the Heavenly Father. Christianity is more than the revelation of a Book as with the Avesta, the Qur'an or the Old Testament, it is the revelation of a Personal Life, not only the Perfect Exemplar of the Divine Nature, but One whose atoning death is the *raison d'être* of man's salvation.

The Hindu belief in the *avatars* of Vishnu as Krishna and Rāma resemble the Christian belief in divine Incarnation. Krishna descends to earth to reveal to Arjuna his duty; Rāma suffers to show that suffering matures the spiritual life; but the

fundamental difference between these *avatars* and the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is seen (*inter alia*) in (1) the mythological character of the animal *avatars*, (2) the need for many *avatars*, not for one supreme *avatar*, (3) the differing amount of divinity in each *avatar* (e.g., half of Vishnu in Rāma), (4) the apotheosis of heroes in contrast with the supernatural account of Christ in the earliest Gospel narratives, (5) the fact that, according to the higher teaching, the Supreme Principle is not personal.

The Christian teaching, as finally formulated at the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, is that 'our Lord Jesus Christ is to us truly God and truly Man . . . co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, the Self-same co-essential with us according to the Manhood; like us in all things, sin apart. . . . One and the same Christ . . . acknowledged in two Natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably.' This expression of faith was formulated after a life and death struggle against the theories that Christ was only a created being (Arianism), or that the divine shared in an imperfect human nature (Apollinarianism), or that Christ possessed two separate natures, the divine and the human (Nestorianism), or that the divine nature absorbed the human (Eutychianism). It is believed that the Chalcedonian formula sums up, as well as human language can at present, the significance of the Christ of the Gospels, as the Supreme Revealer of the divine purposes for man.

The word 'revelation,' as used in a general sense, expresses the intuitive belief of non-Christian religions that God is 'seeking' mankind, but, as applied to Christianity, it signifies the Absolute and

Final Revelation of God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Revelation, in a lower sense, is present wherever there is real religion. If God is the God of all men there is an element or degree of "revelation" in every 'discovery,' and, if man is not a mere passive automaton, an element or degree of 'discovery' in all 'revelation.' It is a significant fact, however, that 'no nature-god or culture-god has ever been able to achieve a real monotheism of universal or spiritual nature. For this achievement there was demanded the revelation of the prophets.'<sup>1</sup> Further, the crown of this ethical monotheism of the prophets was Christ—*finis coronat opus*—who claimed to fulfil prophecy, and yet, as the Revelation of the Father, fulfilled a unique office. To Christ, and to the Scriptures which point to him, the disciple applies the word 'Revelation' in a special and absolute way.

The relation of this unique Revelation to the human or natural reason can bear more than one interpretation. According to Augustine man could, but for the Fall, have attained the highest spiritual truths by the light of natural reason. According to Thomas Aquinas, the truths of Revelation could not have been attained by the natural reason in any event, because the rational mode of human knowledge is naturally incomplete. Whichever view one may take, the comparative study of religions at least shows that, in Christ there are unique truths and a way of salvation, to which other religions have not, as a fact, attained.

The view that Revelation deals with truths unattainable by reason, also maintains that reason and

<sup>1</sup> Söderblom, *The Nature of Revelation*, p. 19.



Revelation are in harmony, so that revealed Truth crowns and completes the lower investigations of the 'unaided' intellect. Such a belief is consistent with the view that non-Christian religion can have revelational value in a general sense. The fact that we find the idea of 'revelation' already present in non-Christian religions, suggests not only the truth of a general revelation, but also the truth of the supreme and absolute Revelation in Christ which confirms what is noble in other religions, and brings to light the unique fact of God's supreme manifestation of redeeming Love.

## CHAPTER II

### IDEAS OF GOD AND REALITY

WE are considering primarily the beliefs of the higher religions as exemplified by their sacred literature. Elementary ideas appear, however, as survivals, in the documents so that some reference to the earlier background is necessary to fill out the picture.

There are three chief views in the field to-day as to the character of pre-historic religion, (1) the theory of *mana* put forward by Dr. Marett before the Third International Congress for the History of Religions in 1908 and advocated by him in the *Threshold of Religion*, (2) the theory of animism which first appeared in Tylor's pioneer work *Primitive Culture* in 1871 and is defended to-day by Dr. Karsten in *The Origins of Religion* (1935), (3) the theory of the high god popularized by Andrew Lang in 1898 and advocated to-day by Dr. Schmidt as evidence of a primitive monotheism.

#### (a) ELEMENTARY RELIGION

##### (i) *Mana and pre-animism—kami*

The term *mana* has been taken from Melanesian beliefs and generalized by Dr. Marett to signify the character of all archaic religion. As religion on its most rudimentary level it means a supernatural power manifesting itself in strange or marvellous

objects or in striking individuals, altogether distinct from physical power, or natural human activity. It is not conceived as personal, but is just thought of as mysterious and supernatural, and acts in all kinds of ways for good or ill. In Melanesia *mana* is associated with 'animism,' i.e., with the belief that spirits originate it, but Dr. Marett thinks that this belief is an explanatory afterthought, the most elementary religion being just the recognition of the supernatural as a vaguely conceived supernormal force before the rise of the belief in independent spirits—hence the title 'pre-animistic' religion.

The Japanese idea of the divine (*kami*), anterior to its appearance in the Shinto literature was probably like *mana*. All that was strange or wondrous was called *kami*. The word in historical times meant 'high, superior, exalted.' The objects of nature were thought of as sentient or alive, not necessarily as possessing spirits, but because of something transcendent or elevated in their nature. The seas and mountains were themselves *kami* as very awful things. And yet *kami* meant a reality more than the material object as such, it was an object possessing *isao* or 'virtue.' Striking individuals were also *kami*, the Mikado especially, who was called *akitsu kami*, 'manifest deity.' The term is applied to all that excited reverence or fear, and to objects as supernatural beings. That the supernatural beings were not originally conceived in the form of spirits is suggested by the fact that the theological idea of *mitama* was put forward to supply the lack of a belief in a separable spirit. The idea of *mitama* does not, however, mean 'spirit,' but is an emanation or effluence of the *kami* into a

sacred object or 'god-body' (*shintai*) kept in the Shinto shrine. Aston compares the belief in *mitama* to the Hebrew conception of the Shekinah and writes 'I cannot see that the Shekinah and *mitama* owe anything to the analogous doctrine of the separability of the human soul and body. The ghost is not the parent of either.'<sup>1</sup> The data indicates that natural objects were themselves regarded as superior powers akin to man, whose effluences came to be thought of as residing sacramentally in shrine objects, each shrine possessing the object appropriate to its deity. The shrine object of the supreme Sun-goddess, Amaterasu, at Ise (a mirror) does not embody the 'spirit' of the sun, but the effluence of the sun-deity.

The divine *kami*, then, do not seem to have been spirits, nor at first to have been clearly personified. They were natural objects regarded as divine not abstract spirits. Being akin to man, and responsive to his desires they were, however, potentially personal, and this they actually became in the sacred documents, as we shall see in a later section.

### (ii) *Polydaemonism—jinn*

The idea of *kami* was distilled from the wonderful and sublime in nature. Pre-Islamic belief gives us the idea of the *jinn* suggested by the mysterious shades of the wild, the home of dangerous animals, producing 'polydaemonism.' The *jinn* were shadowy beings inhabiting the waste places, and were, in view of their origin, mainly objects of dread and fear. The meaning of the name is thought to be 'covert' or 'darkness' in reference

<sup>1</sup> *Shinto (The Way of the Gods)*, p. 26.

to the mysterious untrodden places which they haunt. 'These jinn,' writes Robertson Smith, 'are not pure spirits but corporeal beings, more like beasts than men . . . but they have certain mysterious powers of appearing and disappearing or even of changing their aspect and temporarily assuming human form.'<sup>1</sup> The *jinn* are not spirits but living creatures conceived mainly in the form of the animals of the wild. They are the strange ideas of the imagination, clothed with objective supernormal existence and identified with the actual creatures of the wild. In historical times the *jinn* were never the object of any cult, in the strict sense, but they were propitiated with offerings, on such occasions as the erection of a building, to prevent their evil influence.

According to the theological development of the *Qur'an* the *jinn* were created by Allah to worship Him (LI, 55) and are equated with heathen deities (XXXVII, 158). The *jinn* lead men astray (XLI, 29), but some were converted by the reading of the *Qur'an* (LXXII). The belief in *jinn* as classes without individuality seems to be a survival from primitive times. The Ghūl (a feminine name) is a class of *jinn* of a particularly formidable kind.

Though the *jinn* are chiefly objects of fear there is no ground for assuming that ancient Arabic religion was entirely one of fear. As the demons of the wild they were naturally looked upon as fearful beings, but there is no reason to doubt that, even in the earliest times, happier associations also suggested beneficent beings. The pre-Muhammedan deities also comprise supernatural beings of a

<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of the Semites*, pp. 119-120.

kindlier nature. Al-'Uzza (Venus) 'the most mighty' was the 'blessed'; according to the *Qur'an* one of the daughters of Allah (LIII, 19)—Gad was a deity of 'fortune' or 'luck'—Sa'd of 'good fortune'—Wadd was a god of 'friendship' and 'affection' (LXXI, 22)—Rudā of 'goodwill.' The *Qur'an* (LXXI, 23) also mentions Yaghūth the 'Helper' and Ya'ūq the 'Preserver.' Sometimes a title implying the beneficent character of a deity may be a euphemism applied to a malignant being, in order to appeal to his better nature, but the very use of titles implying hope and confidence show that religion is not born merely of fear. Confidence in the higher spiritual powers enabled the nomad eventually to conquer his fear of the uninhabited wild. Some religions, indeed, such as primitive Shinto, exhibit very little fear. The *kami* are on the whole worshipped with gratitude and joy.

(iii) *Animism—Shên and Kuei.*<sup>1</sup>

E. B. Tylor was the first writer to give a systematic account of the elementary belief in spirits or souls (*animae*) as the moving forces of nature. The most varied phenomena from sun, sky, cloud or wind to brook, plant or stone might possess a spirit akin to that of a ghost or spiritualized man giving it the power of movement or growth. Tylor maintained that dreams and death suggested to archaic man the reality of separable souls, which he associated also with natural objects. From this initial basis there arose in his view all religious beliefs—fetishism, totemism, polytheism, polytheistic

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced 'gway.'

worship, and as a climax, monotheism—the belief in one Supreme Spirit.

The word ‘animism’ is, however, an ambiguous term covering very different kinds of belief. Four, at least, are distinguishable : (1) Animatism ; difficult to differentiate from *mana*. Objects are just conceived of as alive, or supernatural. (2) Incipient animism ; in which the idea of the supernatural is thought of as a spirit inseparable from an object. (3) Animism proper ; an external or separable spirit is thought of as controlling an object. (4) Spiritism ; spirits are thought of as tenanted the environment unassociated with any material object.

According to Tylor the archaic belief in animism involves the belief in a separable soul, but even as late as Biblical times the soul (*nephesh*) is conceived of as the life animating the body rather than a separable incarnated entity. According to this ‘psychology’ a man is life from one aspect and flesh from another, he is not a dualism of soul and body. Behind the Hebrew *nephesh* we see the Babylonian *napistu* ‘life,’ represented by a flowering reed, not a separable spirit. Archaic man as distinguished from his modern representative, the savage, was probably more impressed by concrete objects possessing life than by abstract separable spirits. Concrete objects received the status of divinity, and by an exercise of the recollective imagination, the power of forming mental images, he probably tenanted his environment with imaginative replicas of concrete objects rather than with abstract spiritual beings. The power of recollective imagination rather than the abnormal state of dreams may have been the original ‘occasion’ of religious ideas. It

is this endowment that distinguishes man from the lower animals, and the early cave paintings are evidence of its use in palaeolithic times. Dreams, as Tylor suggested, might well have influenced the later development of the separable spirit. The earliest idea of the supernatural may, however, have been more concrete than that of a vague abstract sense of *mana* or of an abstract spirit. It was more probably the belief in concrete objects possessing *mana*, and also in supernatural beings like concrete ideas of the imagination. The normal mind of man, in touch with a world capable of 'revealing' spirit-life, is thus the occasion of a natural 'revelation.'

The Chinese religion is a striking example of the more developed belief in an all-embracing animism, and spiritism. The sacred documents introduce us to a universe of spirits crowned by T'ien or (Shang-ti) the Supreme Spirit of Heaven. The ancient *Shu Ching* says of the ideal ruler Shun that he 'offered a sacrifice to Shang-ti, made sacrifice to the six venerable things (heavenly bodies), reverently regarded the mountains and rivers, and looked round on the host of the departed.' Objects of nature are mentioned here rather than spirits, but the developed religion regarded almost everything of importance as the expression of spirit—there were spirits of Heaven, the heavenly bodies, weather, seasons, mountains, rivers, seas, soil, crops, former sovereigns, ancestors, even of the door or cooking stove of the poor man's home. Whereas the Shinto idea of *kami* is animatism rather than animism, the developed religion of China is more clearly animism or spiritism. There is a reference in the Book of Odes forbidding a man to say 'this place is not



public, no one can see me here. The approach of spiritual beings cannot be calculated beforehand, but on no account should they be ignored.' Here we find a fully developed spiritism, so pronounced indeed that de Groot in a well-known definition has affirmed that 'the primaeval form of the religion of the Chinese and its very core to this day is animism.' In the sacred documents, however, Shang-ti is a supreme moral being, to whom the spirits are subject, analogous to the earthly ruler. Chinese religion is better described as monarchianism than animism pure and simple, there are higher (*shên*) and lower (*kuei*) spirits with Shang-ti as monarch. Later the *kuei* came to be regarded as malevolent, and a dualism of *shên-kuei* good and evil spirits was held, subordinate to the belief in Shang-ti.

#### (iv) *The high god*

If, as we have seen, archaic man could imagine supernatural beings as mental replicas of concrete objects, there seems nothing intrinsically impossible in his having conceived the idea of a high god in quite early times of his development or as Andrew Lang contended, anterior to the notion of a separable spirit. Father W. Schmidt has argued very laboriously in recent times for a primitive monotheism on the ground (1) the lowest surviving savage tribes are elementary enough to allow for valid inference to prehistoric times, (2) archaic man was influenced by *cognitio causarum*, (3) his 'totalism' (rather than 'differentiation') urged him to seek for the cause of the universe as a whole, (4) and his impulse to personify led him to the idea of the Supreme Cause as personal. It is, however, very questionable whether

the earliest religion was of one high god, apart from belief in any other kind of supernatural ally whether of the *mana* variety or as imagined supernatural beings. The evidence as yet does not seem to be convincing enough to justify the theory of a primitive monotheism. Father Schmidt himself says that of the primitive (= prehistoric) culture properly so called 'hitherto no concrete examples of this can be established anywhere, nor is it likely that we shall ever be able to do so directly.'<sup>1</sup> The modern savage is indeed a far cry from the earliest type of pre-history.

Of the higher religions, which come under our survey, there is no example of a clear or permanent monotheism until the later development of Israel, though ancient Egypt and Persia came to the verge of such a belief.

#### (b) ADVANCED RELIGION—INTRODUCTION

Belief in the supernatural as akin to man, expressed through the medium of mental images, was the matrix out of which the God-idea developed, the personality of the deity being potentially present from the beginning. Mental images might suggest, on a crude level, therio-anthropomorphic beings (polydaemonism), then separable spirits (animism), and, as the sense of personal existence develops, gods possessing definite anthropomorphic characteristics, (polytheism). There is every reason to think that the earliest ideas of supernatural powers were felt, however dimly, to be like human power. Even animals were thought of as near relatives of man, so that a theriomorphic supernatural being was at

<sup>1</sup> *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 240.

heart an anthropomorphic one. Pure abstract thought of an impersonal kind is a mark of more mature reflection, and it is more likely that concrete images aided primitive man to steady his impulsive thoughts than the abstract conception of spirit.

On the higher theological level of the great religions the anthropomorphic idea of God with personal tendencies normally expresses the belief of popular worship, while an impersonal abstract idea of the Supreme is the outcome of philosophical reflection. We shall deal first with the personal conceptions of deity as held in Hinduism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Islam, and then with the impersonal conceptions of Taoism, Upanishad-Hinduism, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Scholastic Confucianism and Sāṃkhya-Hinduism.

The empirical outlook of the mind produces, in the earlier stages, a pluralistic view of the universe. The method of reasoning is primarily *a posteriori* starting from the manifold of experience. Hence we meet with polytheism before monotheism. Maturer polytheistic thought tends towards a belief in the unity of God by (1) the worship of one god at a time (kathenotheism), (2) the raising of one deity to a supreme position of primacy (monarchianism), (3) the adoration of one deity as supreme, without denying explicitly the existence of other supernatural beings (monolatry), (4) emphasis on the ethical sovereignty of God. The latter led to the ethical monotheism of the Old Testament.

The impersonal conceptions of deity as the outcome of *a priori* thought are normally monistic. The speculative mind more definitely systematizes

and seeks unity. Tao of Taoism, Brāhman of Hinduism, Dharmakaya of Buddhism are monistic conceptions arising out of philosophic speculation.

There are also the dualistic systems of two personal beings (Magian Zoroastrianism) or of two ultimate principles (Scholastic Confucianism and Sāmkhya-Hinduism), the result of a certain amount of speculative reflection.

### (c) PERSONAL IDEA OF GOD

(i) *Hinduism (Vedas)*—*polytheism with kathenotheistic tendency*

Our first example of the more advanced God-idea is taken from the polytheistic system of the ancient Vedas of India, the earliest sources of Hinduism. The personality of the deities was not strongly defined, making possible what Profr. Max Müller called 'kathenothism,' viz., the ascription to any one if deity in turn of the attributes of the other deities, as the one deity worshipped at the moment was supreme.

The *Rig-Veda* the original source of the ancient religion of India comprises a number of hymns addressed to nature deities—the sun, the storm cloud, heaven, the wind, dawn and such like—nature is alive with personal deities. Yaska (c. 500 B.C.) classified them into the threefold division of the deities of bright heaven, of the atmosphere and of the earth.

Of the Bright Heaven there were Dyāus, Váruna, Mitra, Surya, Sāvitar, Vishnu, Ushas and the Asvins. Dyāus Pitar the 'Heaven Father' is a waning figure, belonging to an earlier period, the ancestor of *Zeus pater* of Greece and *Ju-piter* of Rome in the Western world. He is the Father who fructifies

mother earth with the life-giving rain. Váruna the all-encompassing sky is the all-seeing deity who punishes sin and so becomes an ethical deity. Mitra, the guardian of the compact and alliance, keeps company with Váruna as an ethical deity. Mitra was associated with the sun as the light of truth. Surya was the sun's disc as it appeared in the sky, while Sāvitar was the sun in its stimulating warmth, the bestower of life and immortality. Vishnu, the sun in movement, making 'three strides' across the heaven, was a minor deity who rose to first rank in later Hinduism. The beauty of the sunrise suggested Ushas the charming goddess of Dawn. The twin Asvins who often appear with her—twilight or morning (and evening) star—ward off from man 'unhealthiness and ailment.'

The chief deities of the atmosphere were Indra, the Maruts, Rudra and Vāta. The principal deity of the air is the prominent tribal deity Indra who fights for the victorious Aryan, and slays the demon Vritra. He is the lightning flash piercing the vast clouds, and thus causing the nourishing rain to descend. The storm-gods, or Maruts are his retinue. The more destructive activity of the storm is represented by Rudra who, in later Hinduism, as Siva, rises to first rank side by side with Vishnu. The Saivite and Vishnuite sects owe their influence to these two deities. Vāyu and Vāta are two forms of the wind-deity carrying the wealth-giving monsoon clouds.

Of the earthly deities Agni, Soma and Yama call for mention. Agni is the sacrificial flame or the welcome home-fire carrying up man's prayers to the gods of the bright heaven. Soma is a deified plant

as the source of the sacred Soma, a sacrificial drink and yet also a god. Yama is more correctly a divine hero than a god, the first to brave the realms of the dead, and open up heaven to man. The departed (*pitris*=fathers) were also entreated for welfare and offspring.

All these deities were thought of on the analogy of the human creature, i.e., they were regarded, according to the light of the age, as personal. They were not originally represented by material images, but by mental images, closely associated with natural phenomena. Ushas, the fair maiden, was the actual dawn with its light and colour. Agni was the fire which burns. This intimate association with nature prevented a vivid sense of spiritual personality from developing. Instead of a clearly defined number of deities possessing strong individuality, we find a polytheism in which it became easy to transfer the attributes of one deity to another. This made it possible for a worshipper to appeal to one particular god, as if he were well-nigh supreme by applying to him attributes normally belonging to other deities. But Vedic worship never attained to monarchianism, viz., the worship of one as permanently supreme above the rest. At one particular moment a certain deity might appear to be sole god, at another a different deity might be invoked and 'all that can be said of a divine being is ascribed to him' (Max Müller); hence Prof. Max Müller's term 'kathenotheism,' 'a successive belief in single supreme gods.' Dr. A. B. Keith reminds us, however, that 'the idea that a Vedic poet could for a moment even shut from his mind the other figures of the pantheon seems incredible.' The term

'kathenotheism' is nevertheless a convenient one for that state of mind which transfers to various deities in turn an inordinate number of attributes rather than rising to a monarchian belief. This attitude facilitated the belief in all the gods as expressions of one principle, rather than the attainment of any real hierarchy with one god as supreme.

The following steps can also be seen in the direction of a later unification of the gods as forms of one universal Spirit. The deities are said to be the guardians of *rita* or 'order.' The *rita* of Indra is 'cosmic activity,' of Agni 'sacrificial ritual,' of Váruna 'ethical conduct.' This idea of 'order' links the deities together. Another unifying idea is that of Aditi the Mother of the ethical deities called after her Adityas (such as Váruna and Mitra); she is also declared to be identical with all the gods and men. Thus the god-idea gradually moved towards a pantheistic assimilation. 'In many ways the priests speak of that which is but one ; they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.' (Rig Veda.) The final stage came with the advance of the concept 'brāhman' (sacred spell or utterance) to the position of Brāhman, the self existent spirit behind all phenomena. Brāhman originally meant the *mana* in the spoken word wielding spiritual and magical power. The priest who made use of that power was a Brāhman 'a wielder of spells,' and the idea of brāhman or spell came to be that of a terrible cosmic force utilized by the priests. The priestly documents (*Brāhmanas*) taught that the magic of the brahmanic spell generated by the sacrifices was even greater than the gods, while the later Upanishad thinkers turned this super-theistic power into

the divine principle behind all the gods. Polytheism thus became a pantheistic monism, with Brāhman as the one ultimate Reality.

In spite of the kathenotheistic or assimilating tendency the two deities Váruna and Indra did attain to a higher rank than other deities; Váruna as a monarch punishing evil; Indra as the warrior deity. But neither retained their prestige for long. Váruna had the better chance of attaining permanent superiority as ruler of the moral order, but his transcendence 'beyond the flight of birds' made him cold and distant. Men were attracted rather to Agni the god of hearth and altar. But all deities alike in post-Vedic times shared the fate of subordination to the growing idea of one Reality informing all things, a view we shall return to later, when considering the Upanishad theology.

(ii) *Shintoism—polytheism with monarchian tendency*

Shintoism is a highly polytheistic system, with a monarchian trend, evinced by the supreme position of Amaterasu the sun goddess. The official record of A.D. 901 gave the number of deities worshipped as 3,132.

We have already seen that the idea of the divine *kami* was originally like *mana* in the sense of the strange or marvellous in nature. The traditional meaning of the word is 'exalted, high, superior.' Among the chief objects of worship were the lofty or conspicuous objects of nature—the sky, stellar bodies, mountains, rivers, trees and animal life. Famous men also became *kami*. Scholars are not in unanimity as to the character of primitive Japanese religion, some affirming that it was originally an



ancestor worship, others a nature worship. The prevailing opinion sides with nature worship. In any event nature deities are in the ascendant—the sun, moon, storm, earth, fire, stars, ricefields, mountains, seas, rivers, trees and other natural phenomena are all deified.

In historical times the *kami* are personal, but they are very closely associated with natural objects, so that natural objects may even themselves be regarded as *kami*. Hence their personality is not at all clearly defined. The *kami* are like mental ideas of supermen, sometimes identified with natural objects, sometimes dissociated from them. These gods, according to the myths of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* are crudely anthropomorphic. They give birth to offspring, after the manner of ordinary mortals, and exhibit the lowest aspects of human passions. They reflect a primitive agrarian community, with its elementary fertility rites, for the successful growth of rice and other vegetation. Amaterasu the sun-goddess takes first place in Shinto, harvest and other agricultural ceremonies being held at her central sanctuary at Ise. Her supreme monarchian position is due to the editing of the sacred documents in the interests of nationalism, so that the Emperor appears as the descendant of the sun-goddess, a ruler by divine right in the highest sense.

The famous Mirror at Ise is said to have been given by Amaterasu to her grandson Ninigi-no-Mikoto the first mythical Emperor of Japan, who regarded it as embodying an effluence of her divine nature (*mitama*). Every Shinto shrine has a visible concrete token of the presence of the particular deity worshipped (a mirror, or sword or some other

object) called a *shintai* or 'god-body.' It was a way of expressing the nearness of the god, who is worshipped, not only as a spiritual being in the plains of High Heaven, but also as present in the *shintai*. This belief in the presence of the deity in the *shintai* is also a way of expressing the omnipresence of the deity.

Devotion and worship regard Amaterasu as eternally in the heavens, but myth gives her an origin either from the right eye of Izanagi, or as the offspring of the primal pair Izanagi (male) and Izanami (female) the primal parents of deities, human beings and the islands of Japan. Fancy does not, however, even rest here, for in the primaeval chaos anterior to Izanagi and Izanami deities, such as the 'Heavenly-Central-Lord' appeared and disappeared in the twilight of the ancient gods. In addition to Amaterasu there issued from the primal parents Tsukiyomi (Moon God) and Susa-no-wo (Storm God). Ohonamochi, the offspring of Susa-no-wo, was an earth deity.

Gods and men are not clearly distinguished from one another in the mythology. Izanagi and Izanami are just human parents of a higher mould. We are not surprised to find, therefore, in Shinto the deification of men, as well as anthropomorphic nature worship. The Mikados as the early offspring of the gods were styled *akitsu kami* 'manifest' or 'incarnate deities.' In the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* their divinity is little more than the privilege of divine descent, but in the later development of the *Yengishiki* they are divinely revered like the nature deities. Other deified men are Hachiman (War God) and Temmangu (God of Learning).

The close relationship of the gods to nature and their anthropomorphic character has led to an idea of God which emphasizes the divine in nature and man, of a somewhat humanitarian type. Hence reverence for the Mikado, the worship of past heroes, and ancestor worship are an integral part of Shintoism.

The monarchian tendency of Shinto was a slight move in the direction of a unification of the divine. Other tendencies to systematization or unification were :—

(1) The Ryōbu or 'Two-fold way of Shinto,' a movement influenced by the Buddhist Shingon sect (eighth century) which regarded the Shinto deities as manifestations of the Supreme Vairochana Buddha (Dainichi), by identifying Amaterasu with Vairochana, and treating the Shinto *kami* as Buddhist saints or bodhisattvas.

(2) The Yui-itsu or ('Only one Shinto'), a fifteenth-century attempt, arising out of the Ryōbu, to show that the *kami* were the originals and the Buddhist deities only manifestations, thus reversing the original doctrine.

(3) The Confucian monarchianism. The influence of China on Japan is very important for an understanding of Japanese religion, and the supreme position of T'ien or Shang-ti in China helped to strengthen the analogous position of Amaterasu in Japan.

(4) In the eighteenth century the revival of 'Pure Shinto' was initiated to cleanse Shinto of Buddhist and Confucian accretions. Hirata one of the reformers, held that *kami* was the one name for the deities of all religions. Preference was also given

to the almost forgotten deity 'Heavenly-Central-Lord,' as one which had not been contaminated by Chinese influence. Genchi Kato to-day claims for this deity a 'primitive monotheism,' but as against such an hypothesis the narrative of the *primaeval* period to which this deity belongs mentions other deities who appeared and disappeared with him. Christianity had some influence on the development of Pure Shinto and the inspiration of Western religion is such that the idea of a unitary Being is now one of the first conveyed to the educated Japanese mind by the word *kami*. But in practice Shintoism is a polytheistic religion.

(iii) *Confucianism—monarchian spiritism*

Confucianism to-day is primarily an ethical system, but its association with the ancient State religion justifies our referring to it as 'religion.' The word 'monarchian' can be applied to Confucianism, because, in the time of Confucius, God was thought of as Shang-ti the 'Supreme Ruler' or as T'ien 'Heaven,' exalted far above all other objects of worship. Shang-ti is depicted in the sacred records as a Heavenly Supreme Monarch, upholding the moral order, and listening to prayer. He is, therefore, regarded as, in some sense, personal. A fair following of scholars, led by the pioneer, Dr. Legge, have referred to the worship of Shang-ti as an original monotheism.<sup>1</sup> The sacred records, however, introduce us from the earliest times not only to the worship of Shang-ti or T'ien, but also to the

<sup>1</sup> Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 11. Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, p. 21. Walshe, E.R.E., III, p. 550.

worship of heavenly bodies, nature spirits and ancestors. The theory of a primitive monotheism rests on the assumption 'that there had grown up round it an inferior worship of multitudinous spirits.' The extreme theory of de Groot that the religion of China is animism to the core is a swing in the opposite direction that fails to account for the unique position of the supreme Deity. The religion seems to be more strictly defined as a 'monarchian spiritism.' Shang-ti is, as the name signifies, 'Supreme Ruler' in Heaven, the prototype of the ruler on earth. The spirits, whether associated or unassociated with natural objects, were subject to him, and any departmental spirit that failed to function, according to the ideal, might be formally deposed from office in the name of Shang-ti. Thus Shang-ti is *de facto* supreme. Like the lower spirits, however, he does not possess a vivid personality. No images represent him and only the faintest anthropomorphic references occur. Yet as the 'Emperor' or 'Ruler' in the spirit world he has more personality than the nature spirits. He is *ex officio* supreme over earthly monarchs. They occupy their earthly throne subject to his will. If unworthy they may be deposed in His name, and a worthier put in their place. This actually happened according to the Book of Records more than once. The monarch ruled, not by divine right like the Japanese Mikado, but by virtue of moral integrity. Hence Shang-ti is conceived of as having an 'ethical' personality. As T'ien, the social duties are derived from him, for he has conferred on all men a moral sense.<sup>1</sup> That Shang-ti is synonymous with T'ien,

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E., III, pp. 55 and 89.

at least in historical times, is shewn by the fact that in the sacred literature the names are used interchangeably like Elohim and Yahweh in the Old Testament. The belief in God is thus a kind of ethical monarchianism.

Probably the term T'ien is the older of the two, and, as referring to Heaven, is a less personal term than Shang-ti, but it has been pointed out that the earliest ideographs for T'ien were anthropomorphic in form, implying an incipient belief in personality. To T'ien, the 'glorious sky, embracing all,' everyone might, in principle, pray as individuals, but the Emperor alone could offer worship, under his name Shang-ti, on behalf of himself and of the Empire. According to Chu Hsi the great Confucian scholastic (A.D. 1130-1200) T'ien is appealed to when it is a question of the protection of inferior beings who owe their existence to him, and Shang-ti is worshipped in the affairs of authority and government. The fact that the term T'ien tended to be more impersonal led to the dispute in the seventeenth century between the Emperor and the Roman Church as to the best way to translate the Christian idea of God in the vernacular. The Jesuits, with the Emperor, preferred T'ien, but were opposed by the Franciscans and Dominicans on the ground that T'ien was too impersonal and materialistic. The Pope's decision to adopt 'T'ien Chu' (Lord of Heaven) against the Emperor's decision was held by the Jesuits to have been one of the chief causes that hindered the conversion of China.

Another term for the divine is *shên*, normally used in a generic sense for spirits or nature gods. It also appears in association with *kuei* in a dualistic sense.

The *shên* are the higher spirits and the *kuei* spirits of a lesser or demonic order. The word *shên* might, indeed, be used in the singular if a qualifying word so indicated. In virtue of this fact some have preferred *shên* to Shang-ti or T'ien, as an appropriate non-committal term for the Christian idea of God. *Shên* seems, however, to be less suitable because of its usual pluralistic associations.

A dualistic cosmogony also developed in Confucian theology, which has gradually eclipsed the grandeur of its monarchianism. Sacrifices were offered in the Chou dynasty to both Heaven and Earth as the parents of all things, and the universe was held to be the theatre of two principles Yang and Yin, favourable and unfavourable powers respectively. The sacrificial system was a means of gaining a preponderance of the favourable powers. Nevertheless it was maintained that 'by the rites for Heaven and Earth Shang-ti is served' (Doctrine of the Mean, XIX, 6), and, consistently with this, the Sacred Books refer to the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth and then to T'ien, as if the dualism were ultimately a theism, e.g., 'Heaven and Earth is the parent of all creatures . . . now, Shâu the king of Shang, does not reverence Heaven above . . . Heaven loves the people, and the sovereign should reverently carry out this mind of Heaven.'<sup>1</sup>

Not only did animism and dualism stand in the light of monotheistic development, but also, more seriously, the widespread and deep-rooted practice of ancestor worship. This popular cult was an outlet for religious feelings, which were not allowed free expression in the imperial cult of Shang-ti,

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E. III, pp. 125 and 127.

limited virtually, as it was, to the Emperor. Shang-ti too was a cold transcendent deity from whom the warmer feelings of communion were absent; the sublime and stern moral Governor, not the fervent God of a glowing immanentism or a God of love. Hence the ancestors, as the spiritual parents in communion with their children, came to possess the status of deity. They were prayed to for help, and revered with the awe that is due to God alone. Hence the monarchianism of T'ien was unable to progress towards monotheism.

When Confucius (551-478 B.C.) felt the call to intensify the moral ideal, there was already in existence the worship of T'ien (Shang-ti), of *shên* (spirits), of ancestors and dualistic sacrifices. His main pre-occupation was with ethical culture, and he forbade speculation or inquiry into the idea of God and spirits. He was, however, not iconoclastic but conservative, and advocated sincere reverence at the accustomed rites as giving stability to the moral life. But his reticent attitude to the belief in God, his preference for the somewhat impersonal T'ien, his insistence on the example of sages, and his advocacy of ancestor worship, all tended to depersonalize the idea of God and to encourage a humanistic religion. Hence the later scholastic system of Chu Hsi attenuated the idea of T'ien into what was little more than a metaphor, and accentuated the dualism into a kind of cosmic pantheism. The State worship as an integral part of Confucianism upheld the belief in Shang-ti till its abolition in the Revolution of 1911, and Confucianism is to-day little more than an ethical system, agnostic as to deity.



(iv) *Zoroastrianism (Gāthas)*—*monolatry as potential monotheism*

In the early *Gāthas* Zarathushtra appears before us as a 'prophet' commissioned by Ahura Mazdah (The Wise Lord) to fight on behalf of the peace-loving agriculturalist tribes against the more primitive lawless and aggressive pastorals. The name Assara Mazas (=Ahura Mazdah) in archaic cuneiform script amongst the ancient tablets of Assur-bani-pal is evidence of the use of the divine name before the time of Zarathushtra.

Zarathushtra worships Ahura Mazdah alone, to the exclusion of all other deities. The personality of God is clearly implied in the *Gāthas*. He listens to the prayers of the reformer, charges him to uphold the Right and is his Friend and Sustainer in the adversities of a difficult life work. Ahura Mazdah is a Spirit, and no crude anthropomorphic mythology mars the conception of his being. The Greeks, we are told by Herodotus, were surprised to find in Persia spiritual and immaterial beings unrepresented by images. Ahura Mazdah is a transcendent being raised above nature, and thus able to wield ethical authority, as in the case of the Chinese Shang-ti or the Hindu Váruna. Consequently he is also raised above the nature-orgies of Mithra and other unworthy practices, and is the exemplar of Truth and Righteousness.

The religion of Zarathushtra is variously interpreted either as a pure monotheism or a radical dualism. Strictly speaking it seems to be a monolatry on the threshold of monotheism. Ahura Mazdah is indeed Zarathushtra's Supreme Object

of devotion, but spiritual beings (*daēvas*) were recognized as the worshipful beings of the opposing pastoral nomads. These latter had indeed a distinctly lower status than Ahura Mazdah, and were the authors of untruthfulness and dishonour. They were demonic beings of evil not clearly created by Ahura Mazdah, but destined eventually to submit to him as the Supreme Cause of all Good. Ahura Mazdah, as this Supreme Cause, is, in the original *Gāthas*, 'First and Last' (Yasna XXXI, 8), All-knowing (XLV, 3), Creator of living beings and of man's religious nature (*daēna*) (XXXI, 11), Father of Right (XLVII, 2), Giver of Immortality to the righteous and of torments to those of the Lie (XLV, 7; LI, 9), for he 'made actions and words to have their meed—evil for evil, a good destiny for the good' (XLIII, 5). He is supreme in knowledge for he 'knows the parties twain' (XXXI, 2), i.e., his omniscience extends to the activity of the evil deities, as well as to the good spirits.

In contrast with this powerful movement towards monotheism there is the enigmatic passage in the *Gāthas* as to the 'two primal spirits who revealed themselves in vision as twins . . . the Better and the Bad in thought word and action. And between these two the wise one chose aright and the foolish one not so. And when these twain spirits came together in the beginning, they established Life and not-Life, and that, at the last, the Worst Existence shall be to the followers of the Lie, but the Best Thought to him that follows Right.' (Yasna XXX, 3)

Does the expression 'Twin-Spirits' mean two ultimate deities—Ahura Mazdah and Angra Mainyu—fundamentally opposed to one another? Or does

it refer to the conflict between Ahura Mazdah and a *primaeva* *daēva* or created spirit? Or does the passage signify the *primaeva* choice of two spirits, both of whom were created by Ahura Mazdah?

Prof. Moulton maintained that Zarathushtra was a monotheist, and that it is a mistake to interpret this passage as a clearly thought-out theology. It is a pictorial way of saying that good cannot be conceived apart from evil and if the idea of the good is eternal so in a sense is the idea of evil.<sup>1</sup> Prof. Jackson on the other hand identifies the Twin-spirits of the *Gāthas* with Ormazd and Ahriman, on the ground that the later Mazdaean dualism has its origins in these ancient documents.

The few *Gāthas* that have survived seem hardly sufficient to allow for dogmatic assumptions. We are, at least, in the atmosphere of a monolatry of so high an order, that it is hardly distinguishable from monotheism. The word *angra* 'hostile' is applied only once to the evil spirit in the *Gāthas* (XLV, 2), and is not yet a personal title as in the later dualism. The *daēvas* themselves are the old Indo-Iranian nature gods dethroned by Zarathushtra, but still retained by the enemy tribes, and apparently recognized by him, as their gods. But there is nothing in the context to justify the actual identification of the Twin-Spirits with two fundamental principles, and a later *Yasna* (XIX) gives the monistic interpretation of both spirits as a creation of Ahura Mazdah ('my spirits'). The omniscience of Ahura Mazdah, his power of deciding the destinies of men whether for good or evil, and of eventually conquering the forces of evil, place him in a strong position

<sup>1</sup> *The Treasure of the Magi*, p. 27.

not far from monotheism. It is assumed in the *nonne* questions of Yasna XLIV, 5, that Ahura Mazdah is the supreme artist of both light and darkness, in contrast with the later belief that they are the creation and counter-creation of Ormazd and Ahriman respectively.

A tendency to dualism is, however, present in that the *daēvas* are not referred to unambiguously as the creatures of Ahura Mazdah. The supreme problem for Zarathushtra was how to disable them and nullify their power, while his optimism enabled him to foresee the eventual victory of Ahura Mazdah. The ultimate nature of these powerful godlings was beside the point, the task was how to overcome them. If Zarathushtra was a monolatrism, he was not the monolatrism who accepted the gods of other tribes at their face value. But the failure to eliminate them from the horizon accounts for the later development of a more explicit dualism.

Dr. Haug, a pioneer scholar of Zoroastrianism, regarded the prophet's theology as monotheism, and his speculative philosophy as dualism.<sup>1</sup> It seems somewhat artificial, however, to divide the practical teaching of the *Gāthas* into theology and philosophy.

The Supreme Being of Zarathushtra was not thought of as a bare unity. The *Gāthas* mention a number of *ahuras*. (lords) to whom men pray (XXX, 9; XXXI, 4; L, 1) as well as Ahura Mazdah. 'I would praise you, as never before, Right and Good Thought and Ahura Mazdah' (XXVIII, 3). These *ahuras* appear, however, to be attributes of God (XXXI, 8), created by him

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on the Religion of the Parsis*. Edited by Dr. West, p. 300.

(XXXI, 7), subject to his behest (XXX, 8), and do not mar the unity of God.

Six of these *ahuras* were in later Zoroastrian times formed into a hexad of ministering spirits, but in the *Gāthas* they seem to be too closely associated with Ahura Mazdah to be regarded as separate beings, and their quasi-personal character seems to be due to the vivid mind of the prophet. These six attributes are Vohu Manah ('Good Thought') Asha ('Right') Aramaiti ('Piety') Khshathra ('Dominion') Haurvatāt ('Welfare') and Ameretāt ('Immortality'). Prof. J. H. Moulton in a telling paragraph writes 'We see that this profound thinker's instinct not only grasped the supreme truth of the oneness of God, but realized the vital corollary—blindness to which has vitiated the monotheism of Islam—that there must be diversity within the Godhead if the unity is to be a fruitful doctrine.'<sup>1</sup> Yasna XLVII, 1, mentions all the six attributes or gifts of God together 'By his holy Spirit and by Best Thought, deed and word, in accordance with Right, Mazdah Ahura with Dominion and Piety shall give us Welfare and Immortality.' Of three of them (Good Thought, Right and Piety) Ahura Mazdah is said to be Father. 'Fatherhood' seems here to mean that God is their ground and originator.

These attributes were probably once helpful animistic spirits, which the prophet linked closely to God as the author of all good. Vohu Manah is for example the protecting genius of cattle, Asha the fire-spirit, Aramaiti mother earth, Khshathra the metal spirit, Haurvatāt the spirit of water and

<sup>1</sup> *The Treasure of the Magi*, p. 24.

Ameretāt of plants. An alternative view held by some scholars is that the *ahuras* were originally the attributes of Ahura Mazdah and were later associated with natural objects. But the later association with concrete objects seems more likely to be a reversion to type, analogous to the return of the god Mithra originally rejected by the prophet. Sanscrit words, cognate with the Avestan also suggest ancient associations of these attributes with nature before the Aryan and Persian religions broke away. For example, the Indian Sanscrit *amrita* (Cf. Ameretāt) means 'immortality' and 'plant life'; *ar* and *mātar* (Cf. Aramaiti) mean 'to stir the soil' and 'mother' respectively, and the *Gāthas* refer to Aramaiti as giving continued life to the departed, with evident reference to burial in 'mother earth.'

Other abstractions also occur in the *Gāthas* as attributes of God, viz., Spenta Mainyu 'holy spirit' and Shraosha 'obedience' with reference to God's grace and man's conduct.

After the time of Zarathushtra the hexad mentioned above received the name Amesha Spentas 'Holy Immortal Ones' and became separate beings as archangels subordinate to Ahura Mazdah. Worship was, however, offered to them, in their own right, so that Ahura Mazdah became a monarchian deity surrounded by a hierarchy of worshipful beings, in addition to being the good deity of a growing dualism.

(v) *Zoroastrianism (Magian)*—*antithetic dualism*

Dualism or the doctrine of two ultimate principles may be (1) correlative, (2) antithetic, or (3) a mean between the two. In the first case the two principles may, by their harmonious correlation,

produce the manifold variety of the universe, as is the case of the Chinese Yang and Yin. In the second kind the two principles may be opposed to one another, as in the case of Osiris and Set the personification of good and evil in ancient Egypt. Midway between these extremes is the metaphysical dualism of philosophical speculation, which maintains a working harmony in the world of appearance, though, in a metaphysical sense, the two principles are ultimately irreconcilable, as in the Hindu Sāmkhya, with its two-fold spirit (*purusha*) and material matrix (*prakriti*), or as in the Platonic system of being and becoming.

The later Magian development of Zoroastrianism emphasized the antithetic form of dualism, the antithesis being ethical in character. Its Gathic basis is the Twin-Spirit passage already referred to. 'The holiest spirit chose Right . . . so likewise they that are fain to please Ahura Mazdah by dutiful actions . . . between these twain the demons (*daēvas*) also chose not aright' (XXX, 6).

Later theology deepened this dualism by identifying the Twin-Spirits with two opposing deities. According to the *Vendīdād* Ahura Mazdah created all that was good, and Angra Mainyu all that was evil. Fargard I, 6, of the *Vendīdād* asserts for example that 'the third of the good lands which I Ahura Mazdah created, was the strong holy Mouru. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created plunder and sin.' The Magi prohibited inhumation as contaminating the sacred element 'earth,' in contrast with the earlier Gathic conception of Mother Earth (Arāmaiti) as giving life to the dead who reposed in her bosom.

Hence Angra Mainyu is said to have created 'burial.'

The *Bundahish* ('original creation') gives a dualistic account of creation, though it awards 'Auharmazd' the supreme position of omniscience, goodness and unrivalled splendour. He is indeed superior to the evil deity Ahriman by reason of his heavenly abode of eternal light, his creation of everything good, and his knowledge of 'which way the end of the matter' will be. Ahriman, on the other hand, is inferior, by his dwelling in an abyss of darkness, his first ignorance of the existence of Auharmazd, and by his marring, with a lower creative activity, all that is already created good. He creates six arch-fiends, in opposition to the six archangels or Amesha Spentas of Auharmazd, and gives being to a terrifying host of demons in contrast with the holy Yazatas or worshipful hosts of the Righteous Deity. The dualism is a very deep-seated one in spite of Auharmazd's omniscience, because apparently Ahriman is already in existence before creation, and there is no clear indication that he will be entirely destroyed after his defeat. He falls back into the abyss of darkness impotent and humiliated, but not necessarily annihilated.

The Zervanists were an unorthodox sect who felt the unsatisfactory character of a fundamental dualism, and maintained the view that Zervan Akarana 'Boundless Time' was the ultimate Reality or *fons deitatis* from which both Ormazd and Ahriman emanated. The Gayomarthians attempted to secure a monotheistic position by holding that Yazdân (Ormazd) was the supreme deity, from whom, in a moment of doubt, Ahriman came into being. This may be interpreted to men that Ahura Mazda



comprises within himself the two spirits Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu, as if the two antithetic principles were aspects of his nature, or, as the modern Parsis affirm, Ahura Mazda created two spirits, Spenta Mainyu from whom all good comes and Angra Mainyu from whom proceeds all that is evil and destructive. The Parsi belief is akin to the Gayomarthian, and owing partly to Christian influence is explicitly monotheistic.

In the *Vendīdād* and in practical religion the dualism became very largely a conflict of magical formulae. The prize went to the one who wielded the most powerful incantation. This is probably due, as pointed out by Dr. Moulton, to the rise of the Magi to power from a lower stratum of culture. Even Ahura Mazda is conceived as overcoming evil by means of the *manthra* or spell.

The dualistic system of Mithraism in the Roman Empire was the repercussion of Zoroastrianism in the Roman world. Mithra took over the ethical attributes of Ahura Mazda in the conflict with evil, typified by the myth of the slaying of the bull, and the Zervanists were responsible for the Mithraic theology of an ultimate unity as 'Boundless Time.' Manichaeism, which influenced early Christianity, took over the dualistic account of creation, but (perhaps under the influence of Buddhism) transformed the conflict of good and evil into a conflict of spirit and matter. Matter is never evil in Zoroastrianism.

#### (vi) *Judaism—ethical monotheism*

The religious development of the Old Testament brings to light the first well formed and explicit

monotheism which had a powerful formative influence on the religion of the future.

Zarathushtra reached the threshold, but his teaching failed to influence his immediate successors. Akhnaton has been held to have 'evolved a monotheistic religion second only to Christianity itself in purity of tone.'<sup>1</sup> A closer study of the facts, however, leads to a less idealistic picture of a remarkable but weak ruler whose iconoclasm was repudiated not long after his death. 'Whilst Amenhetep iv (Akhnaton) was proclaiming the oneness of Aten in the City of Aten, the worshipper of Amen was proclaiming the oneness of Amen in Thebes, the worshipper of Ra or Tem was proclaiming the oneness of his god in Heliopolis, and so on throughout the country.'<sup>2</sup> Akhnaton had attempted to enforce belief in a particular deity on all his subjects; there was no organic inner evolution of a monotheistic faith influencing the religion as a whole.

'Ethical monotheism,' as modern scholars have termed the Revelation of the eighth-century prophets, is a clear affirmation of the belief in one God, as the source and sanction of all that is true and moral. 'Seek good and ye shall live,' is the equivalent of 'Seek Yahweh and ye shall live' (Amos v, 14 and 6). Israel had only gradually come to realize this truth through the lower stages of polytheism and monolatry, but the belief overcame all hindrances, and reached its high-water mark in the teaching of 2nd Isaiah, the crowning conviction of the Jewish faith. 'I am Yahweh, and there is none else; beside me there is no God. . . . I am Yahweh, and

<sup>1</sup> A. Weigall, *The Life and Times of Akhnaton*, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> W. Budge, *Tutankhamen*, p. 150.

there is none else.' Against Persian dualism the same prophet proclaims of Yahweh 'I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and bring calamity. I am Yahweh that doeth all these things' (Isaiah xlv, 5-7). It is little wonder that 2nd Isaiah had a vision of God's love, embracing all men; for the full implication of the oneness of God is His relationship to all creatures. But the Jew found it difficult to remain on the heights, and the belief that Israel was God's own peculiar people prevented religion from transcending the limits of the nation, except to proselytize Gentiles to a national faith.

The personality of God is clearly involved in this relationship of God to Israel throughout its historical development, in his love for the nation, and by his moral attributes. 'Yahweh, Yahweh, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty' (Exodus xxxiv, 6-7).

Orthodox Judaism regards the earlier teaching of Moses as explicitly monotheistic, but we are on firmer ground in tracing its first development to the eighth-century prophets. Such a text as Deuteronomy vi, 4, 'Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God is one Yahweh' no doubt owes its explicit formulation to prophetic influence.

Judaism not only held firmly to the unity of God, but to a strict interpretation of the divine unicity. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is held to be a violation of the unicity of God. Some theologians have not only denied the belief in hypostases within

the Godhead, but even the reality of particular attributes lest they should be given a quasi-personality derogatory to the divine unicity. References in Philo to the mediatorial activity of the Logos or Word of God as 'Son,' 'Eldest Son,' 'Firstborn of God,' or in the Targums to Memra, or in Rabbinic theology to the angel of the presence (Metatron) have all been interpreted by orthodoxy as names given to God, not as personal distinctions within the Godhead. It is permissible, however, to assert attributes of God. Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience, the so-called metaphysical attributes, are maintained, and Holiness, Justice and Goodness, the moral attributes. The Thirteen Articles of Maimonides hold that God is (Art. 1) Creator of all things, (2) One, (3) Incorporeal, (4) Eternal, literally 'First and Last,' (5) Alone to be worshipped, and (10) Omniscient.

The transcendence of God is clearly affirmed. We have seen that the doctrine of transcendence normally conserves the ethical life, as with Shang-ti, Váruna, and Ahura Mazdah. The Psalmist thinks of the Supreme Being as enthroned above the praises of Israel and seated above the water floods. The immanence of God is also involved in the conviction of the prophet that God speaks within the soul, and is implied in the experience of the faithful that God is continually nigh. 'Thus saith the High and Lofty one that inhabiteth eternity whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the High and Holy Place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit' (Isaiah lvii, 15). The fact that the *nephesh* or life of man is divinely inbreathed is evidence of a belief in univocal immanence, in addition to the testimony

of the special gift of the divine *ruach* or spirit on certain occasions. Nevertheless orthodox Judaism has, on the whole, developed the rationalistic and nomistic attitude, rather than the emotional and mystic, at the cost of a weakened belief in divine immanence. Both orthodox and liberal are a little fearful of the mysticism of the Kabbāla, which was fanciful in its speculations and encouraged antinomianism. The Kabbāla maintained that God transcended human thought, but was present everywhere in His emanations (*Sefiroth*). These emanations were nothing less than God at work in the world and in the human heart. On the other hand, for Judaism as a whole, God is primarily the Supreme Moral Governor, Father and King who is, indeed, 'nigh to all those who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth,' (Psalm cxlv, 18), but, in relation to whom, the belief in communion and mystic union is not strongly developed.

(vii) *Islam—omnipotent monotheism*

The belief in the divine unity was, perhaps, even more explicitly expressed in Muhammedanism than in Judaism. The cry from countless minarets, at the hour of prayer, brings home this conviction to the Moslem day by day. 'There is no God but God, and Muhammed is his prophet.' The most oft-quoted passage of the *Qur'an* reiterates the belief, 'Say, He is God alone; God the Eternal! He begetteth not, and He is not begotten. And there is none like unto him!' (Sura CXII, The Unity). The belief in unity also means a strict unicity. There is just the slightest trace of a distinction within the Godhead akin to the Jewish Memra, the

cognate *amr* of Allah—‘ It is Allah who hath created seven heavens and as many earths ; the divine *amr* cometh down through them all ’ (Sura LXV, 12). But this reference is little more than a way of guarding the divine transcendence, and has had no influence on Islamic theology. Islam is fundamentally a strict monotheism, and any attempt to break up the unity is strongly condemned. Hence Muhammed could only refer to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity with horror. ‘ Believe therefore in God and his apostles, and say not “ Three ” (there is a Trinity)—Forbear—it will be better for you. God is only one God. Far be it from His Glory to have a Son ’ (Sura IV, 169). Both the unity of God, as against polytheism, and the unicity of God, as against Trinitarianism, are vigorously defended. It appears, however, that the prophet was influenced by heretical teaching on the Trinity. ‘ O Jesus, Son of Mary, hast thou said unto mankind “ Take me and my Mother as two Gods, beside God ” ’ (Sura V, 116). The Trinity referred to here is that of Father, Mother and Son akin to the Egyptian Triads. Muhammed could naturally only see Tritheism in this, and his revulsion against the Semitic belief in the physical relationship of the father-god to the tribe prevented his appreciating the idea of divine Fatherhood in a spiritual sense—not to mention the desire to combat the attribution of sex to deities.

The name Allah (*Al Ilāh* ‘ The deity ’) was not new with Muhammed, and is probably related to the Old Testament *El*, *Eloah* *Elohim*. It seems to have been already a generic name for God amongst the pre-Islamic nomads, and hence was a good *point*

*d'appui* for developing a doctrine of monotheism. There were many influences behind this development, including dissatisfaction at a gross idolatry which led to the formation of a body of Hanifs ('penitents') seeking for truth, but above all there was the positive influence of the monotheism of Jew and Christian. John of Damascus, the Christian theologian who held high office at the Islamic Umayyad court, looked upon Muhammedanism as a Christian heresy, rather than an entirely different religion.

The belief in divine unity was accepted by the nomad in loyalty to a great leader who had fought for the truth and won it by the sword's power. And by the sword's power the doctrine of Unity won its way beyond the borders of Arabia. It was a question of Might being Right. The idea of God in Islam is conceived after the same manner. 'The essence of Allah,' writes Dr. Stanton, 'is Power which overrides all His mere attributes and enables Him to exercise them or not as He pleases.'<sup>1</sup> He also points out that in the earliest chapters of the *Qur'an* the omnipotence of Allah is more prominent even than His Unity. The Unity of Allah is not primarily a Unity of Love but of Omnipotence. As Muhammed had unified the tribes by physical power, so Allah would demonstrate His Unity by the power of his omnipotent will, and threats of punishment are far more prominent in the *Qur'an* than appeals to the heart. The omnipotent will of God is indeed tempered by Mercy, as the Bismillah at the head of the Suras reiterates 'In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.' But

<sup>1</sup> Stanton, *The Teaching of the Qur'an*, p. 32.

Love is not the ruling attribute of God. Like the oriental monarch or leader He is 'indulgent' (Sura LXXXV, 17) and 'forgiving' to those who are ready to bend their wills to His arbitrary will. Indeed they *must* bend them, if He so decreeth. 'But will it ye shall not, unless God will it, for God is knowing, wise. He causeth whom He will to enter into his mercy' (Sura LXXXVI, 30). 'God misleadeth whom He will, and whom He will doth He guide aright; and none knoweth the armies of the Lord but Himself; and this is none other than a warning to mankind' (Sura LXXIV, 34). The 'ethical monotheism' of the Hebrew prophets was on quite a different level from this militant 'omnipotent monotheism' of Muhammed. The latter succeeded indeed in raising the morality of a demoralized Arabia, but it was mainly an appeal through fear, not an appeal to the essentially ethical character of God. Allah is the sheer personification of the numinous, omnipotent, terrible, supremely great, capricious, arbitrary, the *mysterium tremendum*, urgent in appeal, fostering in the creature a sense of his utter creatureliness and nothingness. And the divine arbitrary will determines the good. Allah does not will a thing because it is good, it is good because He wills it. As the 'Wholly-Other' He is transcendent, at the expense of being immanent. He is, however, also conceived as Omnipresent (Sura LVIII, 8), Omnipotent (Sura XXX, 25), and Omniscient (Sura XXXIV, 2) and the divine sovereignty is so absolute that there is hardly any room left for human freedom. 'Every man's fate have we fastened about his neck' (Sura XVII, 14).



Theologians have asserted the following seven attributes of God—Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, Hearing, Seeing, Speech. The emphasis on the unicity of God has given rise to much discussion on these attributes. The school of the *Sifātias* (*sifāt* 'attribute'), the more orthodox, held that the attributes were distinct but not separate from the divine essence, in which they were eternally inherent. The Mutazilites or rationalists were afraid, on the other hand, to speak of eternal attributes at all, lest it be argued that there were more than one eternal being. The Mutazilite Abu Hudhayl Muhammed al-Allaf (*d.* A.D. 840) taught that the qualities were not in the divine essence, but they were his essence, though thinkable apart from it. There was also the fear lest the qualities be hypostasized, as with the Christian Trinity, into Persons within the Godhead. For the Mutazilites the attributes were little more than mental abstractions, with no real existence in the divine essence. They also rejected the attributes of seeing, hearing and speech on the ground that they were accidental qualities of corporeal being. The theology of Al Ashari in opposition to the Mutazilites upheld the seven attributes, and accepted the anthropomorphisms of the Qur'an (God's hands, voice, etc.), without asking questions as to how they were to be taken, and without drawing literal conclusions about them. The Asharians represent the Sunni or orthodox position. The affirmation of the reality of the attributes helped to emphasize the divine personality, which was much needed, because the personality of God tended in Islam to be hidden behind the transcendent sovereign will, and so encouraged belief in an

impersonal fate determining a man's destiny in spite of himself.

The warmer aspect of deity as near to man, implied in the doctrine of the divine immanence, has found expression in minority movements, in reaction against an overstressed transcendence.

The most important of these reactions, the mystic movement of the Sufis will be dealt with later.

The unorthodox Shiah ('followers' of Ali) held that God spoke to the community through the Imām, or leader of the faithful, who was raised above human blemish and sin. A ray of light from the Splendour of the divine glory was said to have been united to the body of Muhammed, and passed from him to Ali (omitting the intervening orthodox Khalifs Abu Bekr, Omar and Othman whom the Shiahs did not accept). Thence the divine ray passed on to the Shiah Imāms. The Imāms were thus looked upon as almost divine, and brought God near to man. In A.D. 940 the last of Twelve Imāms mysteriously disappeared, but he was thought to be still alive, guiding the believers. The Ismailis are a subdivision of the Shiahs who assert that Ismail (or his son) was the last of the Imāms. He was the seventh Imām of their own appointing. This sub-sect lay yet greater stress on the divine character of the Imām.

Another link was now needed between the hidden or last Imām and the community of believers—and the idea of a leader as a living 'door,' or *Bab*, came into being. In 1844 Mirza Ali Muhammed, a much respected social reformer, claimed to be the *Bab* and thus initiated the Babi movement. From Babism arose the Bahai movement, named after

another leader, teaching the universal divine Fatherhood, in contrast with the orthodox Sovereignty of God, and propounding the unity of all religions in a new sense of universal brotherhood. Muhammed had rejected the idea of divine Fatherhood, because of its Trinitarian associations, and the crude Semitic belief in physical parenthood. The Bahai movement is a reaction against a somewhat cold idea of divine omnipotence and transcendence, in favour of a idea of God in which Father love has a place. The Bahais are, by their divergence from orthodox belief, now regarded, not as a sect of Islam, but as a new religion.

#### (d) IMPERSONAL CONCEPTION OF REALITY

##### (i) *Taoism—Metaphysical monism*

The religious consciousness of man seeks normally for a Supreme Being who is responsive to human feelings and is Himself in some way personal. Philosophical reflection may, however, modify this view for a more abstract idea of the Supreme. Such reflection may clarify religious ideas and purify them from superstition. Philosophy is therefore a valuable *ancilla sacrae doctrinae*, but there is often the danger that philosophy, with its impersonal tendency, may take the place of belief in a living personal God.

The depersonalization of God can be seen in the systems of Taoism and Brahmanism of China and India respectively.

Lao-tze the founder of Taoism (born c. 604 B.C.) was not a careful and systematic thinker, but a philosophical mystic, uttering thoughts in a somewhat

paradoxical and disjointed way. His aphorisms, however, can be pieced together into a system which is, by no means, unattractive. We have already described his philosophy of life as belief in mystic sympathy with the universe.

Tao, the supreme Reality, is the name in the *Tao-teh-Ching* for the ultimate metaphysical principle of the universe. Before the time of Lao-tze the term Tao already meant the 'Way' or 'Method' of Heaven as indicated by natural phenomena or divination. But, as expounded by him, it becomes a metaphysical Reality underlying all things. It is the unfathomable cause of everything, revealed in the phenomena of nature, though, as an object of knowledge, it is beyond our grasp. 'The Tao, which can be expressed in words is not the Eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its Eternal name. Without a name it is the Beginning of Heaven and Earth; with a name it is the Mother of all things.'<sup>1</sup> Tao is not a 'transcendent being' like the God Shang-ti, but the Reality pervading all things, a kind of *élan vital*, the ultimate significance of their coming to birth. It can be said to be 'transcendental' as the Reality which is more than mere sense phenomena, but it is immanent in them as that by which they all fulfil the law of their existence. Tao does not follow any law higher than itself, nor does it strive to obey law, its own spontaneous life is the law of its being. It is anterior to God, as the ultimate explanation of everything, and virtually takes the place of the Supreme Being. 'I know not of whom it is the offspring. It appears to have been anterior to any Sovereign Power' (Ti).

<sup>1</sup> L. Giles, *The Sayings of Lao-tze*, p. 19.

'Heaven takes its law from Tao ; but the law of Tao is its own spontaneity.' The principal characteristic of Tao is its silent accomplishment of the great and wonderful ends of nature, without any apparent effort, and without the assertion of any claim. The flowers quietly unfold their beauty, and the stars move silently in their courses.

What though in solemn silence all  
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;  
What though nor real voice nor sound  
Amid their radiant orbs be found?  
In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice;  
For ever singing as they shine,  
'The hand that made us is divine.'

But the hand that makes this universe according to Taoism is not that of a personal God; it is rather the expression of an impersonal monistic principle; a *logos spermaticos* acting spontaneously, without any *telos*. 'It loves and nourishes all things, but does not act as master. It is ever free from desire.' It hides itself behind its works and like the 'primrose by a river's brink,' it takes no pride in its accomplishment. Everything alike is distilled from its abundant life, hence 'the Tao of Heaven has no favourites.' Man can possess Tao and in its spirit can attain great ends. Life according to Tao is 'acting without action' and consists especially of humility, gentleness and freedom from presumption or passion. The *summum bonum* is not a standard, but a life, life in mystic union with the quietistic source of all life.

This somewhat attractive mysticism is expounded

by the paradox and wit of Chuang-tze the Tao-saturated (fourth and third century B.C.). He develops the system on relativistic lines. The Tao alone is real, and ultimately all things are this one Reality. Hence the apparent world of phenomena only gives us relative knowledge. There is no criterion of right and wrong, 'only those who are guided by their intuitions find the true standard.' Neither subjective knowledge, nor the objective universe strictly exist, only the Tao in which all things blend and unite. Even of the Tao it is not permissible to say that it exists, because it is the 'negation' behind all positive existence, the transcendental nature of which can only be apprehended in a 'state which is neither speech nor silence,' it is articulate only to the soul 'passively responsive to externals.' 'In such a negative existence only Tao can abide.' In stillness and quiet is its strength. 'The world looks very beautiful and yet it says nothing.'<sup>1</sup> So man can function aright only by passively allowing the Tao to function in him.

Such a mysticism, paradoxical in character, and philosophical in expression, could not be easily understood or appreciated by the man of the world, and the history of Taoism is mainly the search by magical means for the elixir of life, with the worship of its founder Lao-tze side by side with P'an-ku (the Creator in Chinese myth) and Yü-Huang-Shang-ti (the apotheosis of a famous Taoist magician)—the triad forming a divine Tritheism as the 'Three Pure Ones.'

The Hindu idea of Brāhman bears some likeness to that of Tao, but the treatment by the Hindu

<sup>1</sup> L. Giles, *Musings of a Chinese Mystic*, pp. 41, 61, 65 and 71.

metaphysical mind puts it into a very different class. In China, despite the relativism of Chuang-tze, the reality of the universe was never questioned, whereas in India the belief in its illusion (*māyā*) sunk deep.

(ii) *Hinduism—non-dualism*

The *Upanishads* contain many attempts to understand the origin of things, the earliest hypothesis being that the primordial principle was of a physical nature. *Bṛihadāranyaka* (V, 5, 1) proposes 'Water,' *Chāndogya* (I, 9, 1) suggests 'Space,' or (III, 19, 1) 'non-being' followed by a 'cosmic' egg. *Chānd* (VI, 2, 1) arrives at the belief that 'in the beginning this world was just Being, one only without a Second.' There is only one Real Being. But is it personal? Some asserted (*Bṛihad* I, 4, 1) that 'in the beginning this world was soul alone in the form of a person' (*purusha*). But the prevailing answer was (*Bṛihad* I, 4, 11) 'verily in the beginning this world was Brāhman, one only.' Brāhman, as we have seen, was the intangible *mana* in the spoken word, the magic of thought conveyed in speech, not a personal being. Instead of being regarded as 'person' (*purusha*) Brāhman came to be identified with the *self* (*ātman*) of man, not the empirical self, nor the self in sleep, but the self as subject (transcendental self) conceived of as thought or universal spirit (*Atman*). The identification of Brāhman with Atman is the climax of *Upanishad* speculation, 'verily that great unborn Atman . . . immortal . . . is Brāhman' (*Bṛihad* IV, 4, 25). Thus was reached the belief in mystic union with the Reality immanent in the universe. The only Real thing is

the universal Brāhman and the true self of every man is identical with it. Brāhman = Atman. A corollary of this equation deduced by the *Svetāśvatara Upanishad* is that 'the whole world' is an illusion (*māyā*) and 'nature is illusion' (IV, 10). The universal Atman can be said to pervade all things, but ultimately only *Brāhmanātman* exists (pantheistic acosmism). The *Svetās Upanishad* seems to regard Brāhman as person (III, 3) but the prevailing interpretation maintains that the worship of Brāhman as person (*purusha*) or Lord (*Isvara*) is only relative truth, a concession to practical needs. From the early hypothesis that Brāhman was the Supreme Reality 'in the beginning,' there developed the belief that Brāhman was the ultimate 'principle' underlying all the phenomena of nature, the unitary world ground.

The orthodox theology of Sancara develops this teaching into a monistic system called advaitism, i.e., non-dualism because Brāhman is 'without a second' (*advaita*). The world imagined as a 'second,' and the ego (*ahamkāra*) of man, as a separate existence, different from ultimate being are illusion (*māyā*). The intuitive knowledge that ātman is Brāhman is the goal of all spiritual endeavour, and in that highest experience it is realized that there is no separate self or universe. Brāhman is 'not this, not that' (*neti neti*). It is known not as an object of knowledge, but by the experience of identity.

Sancara, however, justifies the temple worship of Vishnu or Siva as *purusha* by advocating a lower knowledge, in contrast with the higher. This lower knowledge is called ignorance (*avidya*), because it is only 'true' for experience, not for



Supreme Reality. The source of knowledge (*vidya*) is *srūti* or the Vedic revelation, and, for this reason, the teaching of Sancara is also called Vedānta or Veda-end. The teaching of Sancara is regarded in India as the most faithful interpretation of the Vedic revelation, and the feeling that God is not ultimately personal influences consciously or unconsciously the lives of the majority of Hindus. Brāhman is also called sat-cit-ānanda pure unqualified being (*sat*), knowledge without awareness of objects (*cit*), and supreme bliss (*ānanda*).

Radhakrishnan to-day is not satisfied with the interpretation of Sancara, which leaves 'in such high disdain' the world in which we live, move and have our being. He believes that in Brāhman there is some kind of consciousness 'which ever accompanies the contents of consciousness and persists even when there are no contents.' He urges also that the *Upanishads* do not support an abstract conception of the ultimate Reality, because, as interpreted by Sancara, they emphasize 'non-dualism' (advaitism) and not 'monism.' Reality is neither a blank unity nor is it dualistic as the human mind on earth conceives of the dualism of subject and object. 'Brāhman underlies both. While it denies duality, it does not affirm that all things could be dissolved into one, except in a figurative sense.' Radhakrishnan, however, apparently, regards individuality or personality (*nama rupa*) as a mode of the existence of God, for Brāhman alone is ultimately real.

(iii) *Buddhism (Mahāyāna)—Absolute idealism*

The teaching of Gautama Buddha, according to the Pali canon, arose from the conviction that he

had discovered by mystic sympathy the law (*dharma*) of the universe, viz., that thirst for life is the cause of suffering, so that peace can only be attained by the destruction of this thirst. Gautama was not troubled by the ultimate metaphysical nature of the universe, though he was a subtle philosopher, not content with superficial thinking. His main problem was practical deliverance from the suffering and passion of life. His attention was fixed on the ever-flowing stream of life, and he was certain that in the moving stream itself, not in reliance on external principles or powers (whether *Brāhman-ātman* or a personal deity) could salvation be discovered. It is only from within the life process that passion and thirst can be destroyed. We do not, therefore, need to search for an external objective cause of man or the universe. Our aim should be to extinguish craving by mental and moral discipline.

It is held by Mrs. Rhys Davids that Buddha sought the goal of a fuller and richer life in the stream of becoming here and hereafter and not the extinguishing of life. 'Man' is not an un-moving entity as assumed by the equation 'self = static *Brāhman*,' but he is a 'becoming dynamic self.' Consequently he, as a moving or wayfaring self, is the captain of his life, he alone can better his becoming (*bhavya*) because he is the becomer, and reliance on a static divine being, external to the process, is like clinging to a branch overhanging the stream, in order to reach the ocean. Becoming has indeed its immanent law or *dharma*, and salvation depends on the knowledge of this fact. The reality of *dharma* takes the place of the reality of

God or Brāhman. *Dharma* indeed is not an object of worship, neither does it transcend the cosmic process, but its 'transcendental' character, as an object of thought of numinous quality, makes it a supernatural influence for good. A religious cosmodycy takes the place of a theodicy. *Dharma* is not 'person' but 'law.' Salvation, attained by the knowledge of *dharma*, is called *nirvana*, not a place but a state, release from thirst and craving. These two 'constants' *dharma* and *nirvana* are the chief elements out of which Buddhist idealism developed.

The first important development is the quasi-Mahāyāna philosophy of the Mādhyamika school founded by Nāgārjuna (second century A.D.). The *Diamond Sutra* represents the developed teaching of the school. It insists that we can only know phenomena, and that nothing whatever in the universe is a self-existing or static entity. We only know 'objects' as complexes of attributes. Nothing whatever is a thing-in-itself. The highest Reality also escapes our knowledge, and it is wrong to think of it as either existing or not existing. This doctrine is called *Sunya* or 'Emptiness' because it insists that nothing is permanent, and nothing is known positively of the Reality which gives meaning to this universal flux of appearances. The teaching of Nāgārjuna has been called 'nihilism,' because it seems to explain away everything as a series of mental states, or 'nominalism,' because it maintains that objects of thought are no more real than the names or terms we give to them. But there is involved in the teaching of Nāgārjuna the feeling for an unchanging principle underlying phenomena

which later Buddhism developed into the belief in an ideal Absolute, the term *sunya* applied to it being interpreted as meaning 'without qualities.'

The Sanron sect (China c. A.D. 409, Japan c. 625) maintained the teaching of the Diamond Sutra (*Prajñāpāramitā*), and the first step was taken towards equating the goal (*nirvana*) with an unknowable Absolute (*Sunya*), with which man could identify himself, by emptying his mind of all belief in *either* phenomena *or* the Absolute as 'things-in-themselves.'

The Vijñānavādin ('consciousness-way') is the name for another important development of Buddhist philosophy, as expounded by the Brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu. Its idealism is not unlike the subjective idealism of Bishop Berkeley. We only know mental states (*esse is percipi*). But philosophy cannot remain satisfied by a purely subjective idealism. What accounts for apparent objectivity of things? Buddhism could not call on a *deus ex machina* as did Bishop Berkeley, for it had already repudiated any theory of a transcendent deity, as the cause of things. The originating cause is, therefore, held to be an immanent one, a permanent receptacle consciousness (*ālayavijñana*), containing the seeds of mental images and constructive thought. This hypothesis of a repository consciousness is a kind of theory of the sub-conscious, and yet it seems to be more than an individual sub-conscious, it is an over-soul with cosmic significance. Thus an opening is made for the belief in an Ideal Reality, distinct from transient mental phenomena but immanent in them. This school does not develop the view of an objective Absolute, but the way is

now prepared for the doctrine of an objective transcendental Idealism.

The Indian Yogacarya adopted the teaching of this school and passed into China and Japan (seventh century) as the Hosso Sect. Its aim was, by meditation, to attain the height of an all-penetrating vision, in which all things might be seen in their respective natures, as well as in their unity, in the fundamental store or Repository Consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

'The Awakening of the Faith' attributed erroneously to Asvagosha makes a further definite move forward. The view that the individual only knows perceptions and states of consciousness is still upheld, and we are not to imagine that there are external objects corresponding to our ideas. But transcending our individual experiences, yet in some sense immanent in them, and accounting for them, is an objective Ideal Absolute akin to the *Alaya-vijnana* of the Yogacaryas. The Absolute is called *Bhutatathata* 'suchness' or 'thatness' (Pratt) or 'thusness' (Keith)—it is the indefinable background of all being a return of the Hindu Brāhman with a greater stress on its immanence, for it does not exist apart from its 'appearances.' He who dispels the ignorance that 'thoughts' are 'external things' will escape from the craving for material goods, and will attain the peace that qualifies him for *nirvana*, i.e., the attainment of the absolute state. *Nirvana* (one of Buddha's constants in contrast with the impermanence of phenomena) is thus definitely equated with the Absolute. The Absolute, as an object of reason, (i.e., one step lower than ultimate truth) is also called *Dharma* or *Dharmakaya* (law-

<sup>1</sup> Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion*, p. 96.

body) so that the other constant of Buddha, viz., *dharma*, or 'law' has become a name for metaphysical Reality. The Absolute-in-itself beyond reason is called *Bhutatahata*.

The Tien-tai school of China (c. 550) and Tendai of Japan (c. 800) represent this more developed teaching. They absorbed the Sanron teaching (*Mādhyamika*) and in addition to the Diamond Sutra were influenced by the 'Awakening of the Faith,' and the *Lotus Sutra*. The doctrine of three bodies (*tri-kaya*) or planes of reality is developed. The Absolute is *Bhutatahata* the essence of holiness, beyond all description. Practically synonymous with *Bhutatahata* is *Dharmakaya* (Law Body), i.e., the Supreme Reality as it appears to Pure Reason on the highest plane of relative existence, as knowledge (*prajna*) and Love (*karuna*); less real is the plane of the *Sambhogakaya* (The Body of Bliss) i.e., Reality as it appears to the spirit or imagination as Loving Father, etc.; lower still is the plane of space and time, i.e., Reality as it is experienced by the senses on the *Nirmanakaya* (the Body of Transformation).

The Tendai emphasizes the universality of salvation, against the method of illumination, attainable in the Hosso, only by the privileged few. It maintains that the most vicious creature on the plane of space and time has something of the Buddha-heart in him, and like Gautama can attain supreme enlightenment, for all beings live by virtue of the immanent Absolute.

The Absolute or Supreme Buddha-nature transcends the universe in an ideal sense as the unity of all being, but it is also immanent in all phenomena,

so that within all men is the seed of enlightenment—the *bodhicitta* or 'wisdom heart'—which has only to be awakened in order to develop into the flame of perfection of Buddhahood. The Absolute does not exist apart from particular things (the Many), and particular things have no reality apart from the Absolute. To set the Absolute by itself over against phenomena is to create a false dualism.

The historical Buddha was a manifestation of this Supreme Buddha-nature on the plane of human life (*nirmanakaya*). But in virtue of his purity he might appear in higher forms, for all existence participates in the fundamental unity of the Absolute. Buddha might thus appear to mankind on the *Sambhogakaya* in a celestial form as a compassionate Father, to the imagination, as he is said to have appeared on the Vulture Peak to reveal the *Lotus Sutra*. Or he might manifest himself on the 'truth-plane' or *Dharmakaya* to the seeker who aims at identifying himself with the Buddha-nature by the highest method of philosophical meditation.

The 'three bodies' of the Buddhist Trinity (*trikaya*) mean three aspects of the Buddha, manifesting themselves on different planes of our own life, the corporeal, imaginative (or spiritual) and metaphysical, whereby we can have communion with him.

The unmanifest Absolute as it is ultimately is the quintessence of all being. All phenomenal life is strictly relative, incomplete, imperfect and inadequately expresses the Absolute. The manifestation of the Buddha, as person, on the plane of bliss, is, therefore, an inadequate expression of the

Supreme Buddha nature. The highest metaphysical principle in Mahāyāna Buddhism is not thought of as personal, at least not in any sense like human personality. 'It would be a grave error to find any parallelism between human personality and that of Sūnyatā.'<sup>1</sup>

The Kegon (China *c.* A.D. 600, Japan 736) absorbed the Hosso teaching, and stressed more profoundly the immanence of the Absolute. Both Kegon and Tendai teach that the Many are ultimately One, and the One as immanent in the Many. But whereas the Tendai stresses the Absolute Unity (transcendence) the Kegon emphasizes the Multiplicity (immanence). The ideal is to destroy the illusion of a separate ego, and to gain communion with the Supreme Buddha, and through him with all other beings.

The Shingon or True Word Sect (China *c.* 700, Japan *c.* 800) grew out of the Kegon. Its metaphysical idealism is interpreted even more pantheistically than that of the Kegon, and embraced the deities and spirits of the religions with which it came into contact. The Ryobu Shinto is a well-known example of this method. The body of Buddha, called Vairochana (Jap Dainichi) comprises the whole universe, and by means of magical ceremonies and māntras (= true word) it is believed that man can come into touch with the Great Illuminator or Supreme Buddha.

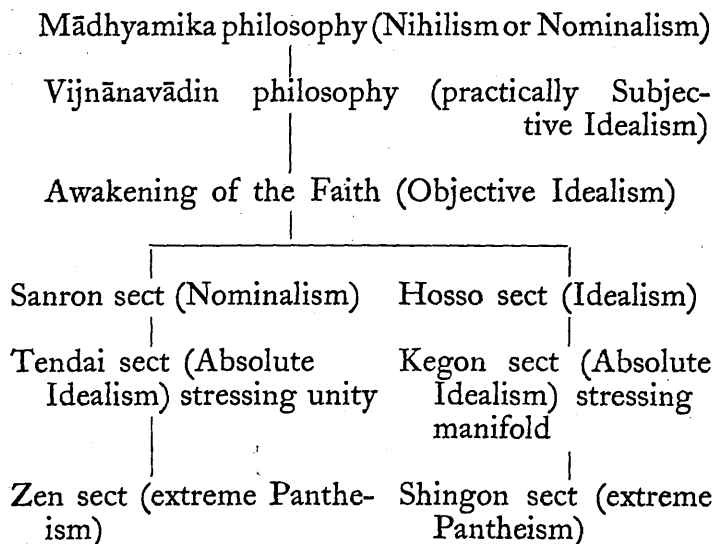
The Dhyana Sect (China, *Ch'an c.* 500, Japan, *Zen. c.* 1191) was influenced by the Tendai and is meditative in character. Its pantheism gives the sect an apparently materialistic trend, and its belief

<sup>1</sup> *Faiths and Fellowship*, Ed. Sir F. Younghusband, p. 39.



in *sunya* (the absolute unknowability of the supreme principle) gives it the appearance of atheism. Reischauer, however, states in his account of the sect that 'while the God-idea does seem to end almost in zero, the Buddhist of this type gives, at least, a passive worship to the mystery of the unknowable Absolute.' The pantheism is so complete that the phenomenal world itself is regarded as a real manifestation of the Absolute, 'nirvana is samsāra,' but not as a mere multiplicity of separate things. *Sunya* links them all into a deeper mystic unity.

The philosophies and sects dealt with may be recalled in the following scheme:—



The Japanese names of the sects are usually given, as representing the more developed teaching. The personal idea of the Buddha, in the Pure Land Sects, is dealt with later.

We witness in the Mahāyāna an attempt to relate Buddha to the universe in a kind of cosmotheism. It is a supreme effort to understand the relationship between the human Buddha and the idea of the divine as an all-embracing Reality. The culminating point in this development is the affirmation of an Absolute, the Supreme Buddha principle, as the unity of all being. This is the 'divine nature.' The historical Gautama is then held to be the human manifestation of this, and the appearance on higher planes of Reality such as the Buddha of the Vulture Peak (plane of bliss) or Vairochana (plane of truth) are manifestations revealing more of the divine and less of the human. But all appearances reveal the Absolute, in some sense immanent in them. The homage paid by worshippers to the Buddha, on the higher planes, has the status of worship, but strictly speaking the Buddha or, more correctly, Buddhas, are men raised to the status of divinity by their gradual progress to supreme enlightenment. The Absolute or highest Buddha state is referred to by Mahāyānists as 'permanence,' 'happiness,' 'self-hood' and 'purity,' but personality as we know it cannot be attributed to it.

(iv) *Confucianism (Scholastic)—correlative dualism*

The dualism of Persia is an 'antithetic' one, a conflict between personal deities. The dualism of China is an 'impersonal' and 'correlative' one, for the universe is held to be the expression of two ultimate forces, whose harmonious working produces the order of nature. Male and female, heaven and earth, summer and winter need one another.

In the Confucian classic Yi-Ching, there appear diagrams of broken and unbroken lines, which were interpreted in an ethical and premonitory manner, as a guide to conduct. In the Appendices to the classic the lines are the basis of a dualistic philosophy. Yi (change) signifies the activity of phenomena, which is due to the interplay of two principles Yang (—) and Yin (— —). The words Yang and Yin do not appear in the body of the treatise, but only in these Appendices (popularly ascribed to Confucius). Yang is held to be the more favourable of the two as the male principle (strength, sun, heaven, etc.). Yin, the less favourable, is the female principle (weakness, moon, earth, etc.). Likewise the whole universe, the seasons, and human nature are due to the interaction of these two principles. Summer is due to the preponderance of Yang, winter to Yin. The active virtues of righteousness are due to Yang, the passive virtues of sympathy to Yin. An over-emphasis on the side of Yin would be unfavourable, but both are necessary for the harmonious expression of nature.

The Chinese are practical rather than speculative, and in the sacred document the broken and unbroken lines are the subject of moralization rather than of metaphysical speculation. There are, however, hints of a unity behind the dualism involved in the idea of their correlation. 'The Yi has the great origin (*T'ai-chi*) which creates the two regulators' (Appendix III). 'The Yi seems to be Heaven and Earth themselves, and therefore it never deviates. It rests in its own abode, and its loving kindness is sincere.' (Appendix I). The Philosophy of Nature of the Sung Dynasty developed

from this the theory of a primordial principle, in which the two principles already existed in potentiality.

Chou-tuni (A.D. 1017-73) was the first of the neo-Confucianist School to develop this new Philosophy of Nature. He adopted the primary principles of the Great Origin (*T'ai chi*) as the source of Yang and Yin. These two elements are held to have evolved from an original unity.

The most illustrious of the Sung Philosophers Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200) developed this dualism into a theory of the interaction of two principles *li* (ethical and spiritual in character) and *ch'i* (corporeal in character like ether). *Li* never occurs without *ch'i*, *ch'i* never occurs without *li*, either in an original undifferentiated state, or, as distinct principles, in creation. 'The plenum of the universe is *ch'i*, and the pilot of the universe is *li*.' Within the plenum there was produced by a kind of evolution the Yang and Yin through the influence of *li* on *ch'i*. *Li* has a logical priority over *ch'i* as the immanent intelligence, and ethical 'pilot.' Chu Hsi identified T'ien with the principle *li*, and conceived of it as incorporeal, in distinction from the strict monism of the Stoics, who regarded the immanent logos as corporeal. Prior to the dualism of Yang and Yin there existed the more ultimate undifferentiated dualism of *li* and *ch'i* out of which the universe evolved, like a star from an original nebula. The material universe of Yang and Yin is primarily related to the *ch'i* principle its plenum, and the ethical principle of *li* manifests itself through the material universe, in proportion to the capacity of the material. The stone only permits

a little *li* to shine through, the flower allows more, man reveals it at its best as humanity (*jên*), reverence, righteousness and wisdom.

This teaching has been variously estimated by western scholars, either as a materialistic immanentism or a lofty theism.<sup>1</sup> The interpretation will depend on whether we emphasize the *li* aspect or *ch'i* aspect of the dualism, or are able to see in *li* a higher principle of unity embracing both. *Li* as the principle of humanity and the right is, in some sense, higher than *ch'i* but even in the undifferentiated primal state it needs the latter. The system is essentially an 'interactionism' of spirit and matter, the all-important characteristic of which is that the universe is moral. *Li* is not conceived of as personal, and the identification of it with T'ien is largely metaphorical. Chu Hsi at one time calls T'ien the blue empyrean and nothing more, at another, in deference to the teaching of the classics, he refers to it as *Chu-tsai* (Ruler or Governor). The system of Chu Hsi was clearly a definite move away from a personal idea of God, though he endeavoured to retain, on an impersonal background, the personal elements of truth and morality.

The origin of the dualism of China was very probably at first a primitive heaven and earth myth, signifying the fructification of mother earth by father heaven. This was adopted into the State religion, in a purified form, in the Chou Dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) when sacrifices were officially offered to Heaven and Earth as if to one deity (Shang-ti). In the popular imagination the dualistic

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Prof. H. A. Giles, *Confucianism and its Rivals*, pp. 234 seq., and Dr. J. P. Bruce, *The Philosophy of Human Nature*.

spirits (*shên-kuei*) helped to reinforce the dualism. When the Yang-Yin theory was officially adopted no serious attempt was made to reconcile the dualism with the classic religion, until the time of the Sung dynasty when the idea of God was depersonalized to give it room.

(v) *Hinduism (Sāmkhya)*—*metaphysical dualism*

The Sāmkhya philosophy is one of the six orthodox systems of Hinduism, traditionally ascribed to Kapila. It is thought to have been anterior to and an influence upon Buddhism. The oldest surviving treatise, however (*Sāmkhya Karika*) is much later than Buddhism, viz., c. fifth century A.D.

According to this system there are two ultimate realities, *purushas* (souls) and *prakriti*, a primordium or matrix out of which the idea of matter develops. *Prakriti* is originally constituted of three elements or *gunas* in perfect equilibrium, viz., *sattva* (being or goodness), *rajas* (movement or passion), *tamas* (passivity or inertia). *Purushas* originally existed in isolation, but in some unexplained way they fall and come into contact with *prakriti*, disturbing its *gunas* and causing the universe to evolve out of *prakriti* as an object of the mind. Various natural phenomena possess differing proportions of the *gunas*; plants are mainly *tamas* (sleep), animals *rajas* (passion) and men *sattva* (goodness). Everything, however, possesses all three *gunas* in some degree. Thus man who normally has an excess of *sattva* may be slothful if *tamas* gains the upper hand. The aim of the Sāmkhya is to gain, by developing the *sattva* element, the right insight that will enable *purusha* to be released from the material world.

*Purusha* in its true nature exists in passivity, purity and stillness uncontaminated by the lower principle, and even when incarcerated in matter it remains perfectly pure and passive. Hence the Sāmkhya is ultimately a metaphysical dualism resting on the conviction of the reality of the subject-object relation. But its temporary incarceration endows *purusha* with individual consciousness, the reflection of itself in matter or non-ego, producing the psychological organs—reason, ego and mind. These organs are material as they evolve out of *prakriti*, but the presence of *purusha*, illuminating them, gives them consciousness. *Purusha*, is a passive spectator, unaware of its pure spiritual character, because the imperfections of the materialistic ego and other psychological organs are attributed to it.

The idea of *purusha* stands for the conception of deity, it is the real God in man, distinct from the ego (*ahamkāra*) which has no share in it. During its imprisonment in *prakriti* it is pantheistic, in its ultimate isolation it stands over against *prakriti*, constituting a dualism. The system is probably a survival of the ancient belief in *purusha* (person) as the original Reality anterior to the belief in the self-existent Brāhman. *Purusha* is indeed so far personal as to be called *cidrupa*, having the 'form of consciousness' but its personal quality is falsely attributed to it by its contact with *prakriti*. The system, as it stands, does not need the idea of Brāhman, and consequently has been regarded as 'atheistic,' but a later adoption of the term Brāhman from the *Vedānta* has given it a more 'theistic' colouring.

(e) IMPERSONAL TENDENCIES WITHIN PERSONAL  
RELIGION

(i) *Sufism and Kabbāla—Pantheistic mysticism*

Dean Inge has defined mysticism as 'the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or, more generally, as the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal.' Mysticism affirms the reality of direct and immediate communion with God. This, in a sense, is the presupposition of all religion, and is consistent with the belief in personal communion with God. But the feeling that personality is a hindrance to complete union with the divine has sometimes led to a pantheism which depersonalizes God, and depreciates personality as a barrier separating man from the supreme object of his quest. Taoism and Hinduism have already supplied examples of such an impersonal mysticism. Sufism and Kabbālism, as movements within personal religion, have not cut themselves adrift from the personal idea of God, but they manifest impersonal tendencies.

Sufism is a mystic movement within Islam. In spite of its pantheistic teaching it managed to survive as an orthodox movement in a religion which upheld the personality of God. This was due primarily to the scholarly exposition of Al Ghazali (d. 1111) which modified the earlier pantheistic teaching, and maintained the ultimate reality of personal communion with Allah.

The mystic movement of Sufism actually embraces varying views but a large number of its adherents,



e.g., Bāyazīd (*d.* 873), Hallāj (*d.* 922), ibn ‘Arabi (*d.* 1240), Jelālud-dīn Rūmī (*d.* 1273) and Hafiz (*d.* 1389) held pantheistic beliefs, maintaining that God is the only reality and all else is illusion (pantheistic acosmism).

Sufism was originally a reaction against:—

- (a) an ultra-transcendent idea of God
- (b) the external legalism of the *fiqh* schools
- (c) the rationalism of the Mutazilites, and
- (d) the irreligion of the Umayyad Khalifs and nobility.

The need was felt for a more emotional form of religion, a warmer sense of the divine presence, and above all a deeper moral earnestness. The movement seems to have been influenced also by Christian asceticism, Gnostic theosophy, Hindu monism (*fana* = elimination of self in the divine) and Neoplatonism (*kashf* = ecstasy).

Sufism is a spiritualistic pantheism, holding that spirit alone is real, as against a materialistic pantheism, such as Stoicism, which maintains that both universe and spirit (*logos*) are material in character. The corner stone of orthodoxy, ‘There is no God but God’ is interpreted as meaning ‘There is no existence beside God.’ He is pure being and all else is either one with Him or illusory. This universe, according to different exponents, is (1) an outward expression of the divine mind, (2) an emanation from pure being which will return to its source, (3) not-being, or (4) illusion. The soul is, for the time being, separated from God, and differs from Him, not in kind, but in degree, and its end is union with (*ittihad*) and absorption (*halūl*) in the Eternal. Man’s ideal is to realize his divinity by the ultimate

elimination or extinction (*fana*) of self. The stages on the way to the mystic goal are service, love, renunciation, knowledge, ecstasy, truth, union and extinction. The poetry of Sufi mysticism, addressing God as the Beloved, in terms of sensible experience (love as *erōs*, wine, etc.) is a description of the pilgrimage on the lower stage of devotion, where nature reflects the absolute Beauty. On the highest level the mystic is insensible to the things of this world, and loses self in the essence of Eternal Being.

In the supreme mystical experience human personality, as such, is no more. 'I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I' (Hallāj). Hallāj was one of the earlier Sufi's whose views cost him his life. The Hindu had said *aham brāhma asmi*, 'I am Brāhman,' Hallāj said 'I am the Truth'; 'I am God.' 'Speak not of self,' wrote Sa'di, 'for to speak of God and self is infidelity.' The Hindu had said the real self *ātman* is *Brāhman*, the Sufi that the self was no more. The two views are very similar, the Hindu also got rid of *ahamkāra* (ego) *manas* (mind) *et cetera*, all that made up human personality, and *moksha* or emancipation from it is akin to the Sufi *fana*. In Islam, however, the belief in the personality of God saved many of the Sufis from identifying the soul with God. Even Hallāj had said of the final experience 'we are two spirits dwelling in one body.' The pantheistic absorption of *ittiḥad* or *ḥalūl* was definitely repudiated by as-Sarraḥ and Al-Ghazali. The orthodox exposition of Al-Ghazali shows the influence indeed of the Neoplatonic ecstasy, in which the soul is raised above the world of sense and mind in union (*wisāl*, *waslat*) with the highest. But the essential nature

of the soul is not the intelligence, it is the will, and likewise with God who 'cannot be considered as the Spirit animating the world, which is the pantheistic position, but as volition outside the world which has willed it to be.'<sup>1</sup> The possibility of ecstasy is justified by the Quranic passage, 'I have breathed into man of my spirit.' Sura XV, 29 (cf. II, 109; XXIV, 40).

The pantheistic view of so many of the Sufi exponents before Al-Ghazali, with the correlative doctrines of absorption and acosmism, cannot be justified by the *Qur'an*. To dismiss material existence as illusory is to open the door to moral irregularity, and an antinomian spirit is sometimes seen in later Sufism, untrue to the moral earnestness of its pioneers. It is not easy for a man to regulate what he does not recognize; spiritual effectiveness arises from the right use of matter, not by repudiation of it.

The echoes of Sufism and Neoplatonism were heard in Judaism. Neoplatonism, especially, provided the mould which shaped Kabbālistic teaching. The Jewish word Kabbāla is from kabal 'to receive,' in allusion to the esoteric tradition 'received' or handed down, in contrast with the exoteric Massora.

The chief Kabbālistic sources are *Yetsirah* ('Creation') written probably in the sixth century and the *Zohar* ('Brightness') which first appeared in Spain, whither Muhammedan Sufism had penetrated, in the thirteenth century. As with Sufism, so with the Kabbāla the need was felt, in reaction against Talmudic rationalism and legalism, for a more emotional religion, and a clearer sense of the

<sup>1</sup> O'Leary, *Arabic Thought*, p. 221.

divine immanence. These documents contain a great deal of fanciful speculation, including a symbolic interpretation of the Hebrew letters, into which we need not enter.

The idea of God or Reality is like the *τὸ ὄν* of Plotinus, but, as the Supreme Being of Judaism, He is spoken of as personal. The Kabbāla is another example, like Sufism, of an impersonal movement within personal religion. The Supreme Being is called *En-Sof* (Heb. *Ain Sōf* 'without end'), Boundless, and is beyond human knowledge. All other existences are emanations from Him, and yet nothing exists outside God, for the emanations are divine. God transcends knowledge, but is immanent in varying degrees in all things. In other words, the universe is due to the partial withdrawal of the divine Being unto Himself, allowing room for lesser expressions of Himself, i.e., finite being. The soul of man is a part of the Divine over-soul. The soul is a trinity of rational, moral and vital elements analogous to a trinity of emanations from God. This trinity of emanations, called *Sefiroth* or Heavenly Spheres are (1) Rational—embracing a triad of 'crown,' 'wisdom' and 'intelligence,' (2) Moral—embracing a triad of 'mercy,' 'justice' and 'beauty,' (3) Physical—embracing a triad of 'victory,' 'glory' and 'foundation.' The last emanation 'kingdom,' making a total of ten *Sephiroth* altogether, signifies the harmony of everything in the divine unity.

The Ten *Sefiroth* or emanations are a means of expressing how the Infinite takes on the attributes of the finite. They are a symbolic way of explaining how the universe came into being. God is the

*vera causa* of the rational, moral and physical elements of the universe and man, by self limitation. The end of human striving is to rise above the finite, and to return to the source from which the soul sprang. 'All souls will return unto the bosom of the Deity whence they emanated. The creature shall not then be distinguished from the Creator. Like God, the soul will rule the universe; she shall command, and God obey.'<sup>1</sup> Abelson affirms that the highest union (*itdabak*) as taught by the Zohar, is the conscious union of love, in which personality is not extinguished.<sup>2</sup> But the final union of the soul with the All is not easily reconciled with the belief in divine personality. Dr. Ginsburg states that the *En Sof* has 'neither will, intention, desire, thought, language, nor action as these properties imply limit and belong to finite things.'<sup>3</sup>

The *Fons Vitae* of Ibn Gabirol (Avicbron), eleventh century, introduced the Neoplatonic emanation philosophy to the West and had an influence on the Kabbāla. Ibn Gabirol was not himself a member of the school, and, in spite of his Neoplatonism, he preserved a personal idea of God by affirming will and wisdom as 'properties' (*proprietaes*) of the divine 'essence' (*essentia*).

Luria (1534-1572) was a forceful Kabbālist who developed its practical side on mystical lines. He taught metempsychosis, the purification of the soul through many lives on its journey back to the One, and inculcated mystical exercises involving the use of amulets, the conjuring of spirits and other questionable practices. The Kabbāla flourished

<sup>1</sup> Ginsburg *The Kabbalah*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Mysticism*, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 88.

as an escape, on the ideal plane, from the terrible sufferings of the ghettos, and it was the humiliating treatment meted out to the Jew that encouraged its mystical and magical degeneration.

(f) PERSONAL IDEA OF GOD WITHIN IMPERSONAL RELIGION

(i) *Buddhism (Mahāyāna)*—*divine manifestation*

The age of the *Saddharma Pundarika* (Lotus Sutra) in India, second century A.D., marked the attempt to conceive of the personal Buddha as the supreme object of worship. The parallel attempt in Hinduism, in the same epoch, was the *Bhagavad Gita* narrating the descent of Krishna, and the later portions of the *Rāmāyana* giving an account of the descent of Rāma. These movements in Buddhism and Hinduism are examples of the rise of personal religion within the impersonal.

The Buddhist sects already discussed—Sanron, Hosso, Tendai, Kegon, Shingon and Zen—paid homage, in varying ways, to an Absolute, in the supreme unity of which all distinctions as separable existences were resolved. The idea of personality could not strictly apply to such an Absolute in its ultimate nature. It did not indeed exist apart from its appearances, but it could not be identified with any particular appearance. But we have seen that the Tendai developed the view that the Buddha could *appear* as a personal being on a lower plane. The chief Pure Land sects therefore arose out of the Tendai, by maintaining that, if Reality is known in its appearances, then the personality of the Buddha, manifested on the lower plane of bliss, was a true

revelation of the eternal Buddha-nature. This personal Buddha is named variously Amitābha (Sanskrit), Amida (Chinese), Omīto (Japanese). The *Lotus Sutra*, accepted by the Pure Land sects presents us in fact with a personal Buddha as eternal. But the real eternal Buddha for the Tendai is the Absolute to which personality cannot strictly be applied. The Pure Land sects, on the other hand, maintained the personality of the supreme Buddha, on the ground that, if the Supreme Buddha is actually immanent in the particular manifestation of the plane of bliss, then we can truly say that the lower plane reveals in some way the ultimate nature of Reality as personal.

The practical inspiration of the Pure Land sects was the legendary vow of Amida Buddha, after he had reached the supreme ideal, to renounce the joy of *nirvana* until he had vicariously saved all mankind. From the purity of his nature there arose not only sufficient merit to save all who call upon him, but also the radiation or emanation of an ideal 'Western Paradise,' to which those who have faith in him will proceed. The strength of this belief in a personal Buddha is due to the conviction that love is eternal. The belief that 'love's strength is love's sacrifice' has given consolation to many millions of Buddhists in the Far East. But when the Mahāyānist reasons out his religion, he finds it difficult to forget the background of absolute idealism, and the living idea of personality begins to fade away, for, in the absolute state, personality is not the same thing as is experienced in the individual life of phenomenal existence. For the consistent Mahāyānist it is only an 'appearance' on the lower plane.

The chief Pure Land or Salvationist sects are :—

(1) Yutsu Nembutsu, Intercessory Pure Land Sect, China, third century, Japan twelfth. The worshipper is bidden to call on Amida not merely for his own selfish ends but, in the spirit of Amida himself, in order to help others.

(2) Jodo, Pure Land Sect (Japan, twelfth century). By faith and works men can be saved.

(3) Jodo-Shin (Japan, thirteenth century). By Faith alone men can be saved.

Like Amida there are countless other Bodhisattvas who have attained illumination and made the great renunciation of *nirvana*. Seldom does a shrine have one image; statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (enlightened beings) are manifold. The absolute idealist would assert that these are all ultimately one in the Supreme Buddha, but the 'Pure Land' worshipper would more naturally regard them as personal beings in the highest state of Buddhahood. The number of these Bodhisattvas prevents the development of monotheism. And the fact that all of them were once men seeking enlightenment, prevents them from having the strict status of deity, though they have that value for the worshipper.

(ii) *Hinduism (Sectarian)—divine descents*

Side by side with the development in India of the ideal personal Buddha there was the *avatar* movement, which gave rise to the belief that Vishnu had descended to the earth in human form as Krishna and Rāma. The *Bhagavad Gita* ('The Lord's Song') is a singularly interesting document, as being the earliest attempt to present the personal deity (Krishna) as a God of love and grace in the highest



sense, without breaking away entirely from the Vedāntic advaitism. The book inconsistently holds, on the one hand, that the worshipper 'becomes Brāhman and wins extinction in Brāhman' (the impersonal monistic principle); V, 24, and yet it proclaims, with no uncertain voice, that he who trusts in loving confidence (*bhakti*) on Krishna as a personal God, will know him as personal in his ultimate nature, the Male-Supreme (*purushot-tama*); superlative of *purusha* 'man' or 'person,' the knower of all, XV, 19. Krishna is indeed 'higher' than the Imperishable, i.e., higher than Brāhman. The feeling for a personal deity has gained the mastery, in a religion which had developed an impersonal idea of supreme Reality. Krishna was not merely regarded indeed as a descent of Vishnu to the earth, but was worshipped as a paternal deity who had revealed his own eternal nature as personal.

Likewise for another section of Vaisnavism, Rāma stood for a personal deity, revealing his love to man. Thus R. C. Dutt translates a verse of the Epic *Rāmāyana* :—

As a father to his children to his loving men he came,  
 Blessed our homes and maids and matrons till our  
     infants lisped his name,  
 For our humble woes and troubles Rama hath the  
     ready tear,  
 To our humble tales of suffering, Rama lends his  
     willing ear!<sup>1</sup>

The lyric poet Tulsi Das (sixteenth century) popularized with great fervour the compassion of

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Rāma for his creatures. But as in the Gita, so, in the 'Ramayan,' Tulsi Das cannot free himself from impersonalism. 'With one aspect of his mind he thinks and speaks in terms of the *advaita*; with the other he thinks and speaks of a personal God who loves him and whom he loves.' Rāma is the Vedāntic 'all-pervading Brahm, void of emotion, without attributes,' and yet he is the divine-human Rāma of the epic, in whom the saint is 'not finally absorbed . . . for this reason that from the first he has received the gift of devotion.'<sup>1</sup>

Analogous to the *avatar* teaching of the Vaisnavas there was the conviction of the other great sectarian movement of Hinduism, the Saivites that Siva had himself appeared from time to time as a God of Love, his devotees experiencing the spiritual joy of personal communion with him. Mānikka Vāsahar (ninth or tenth century), of whom it is said that nothing can melt the heart of the man who is not melted by his Tiruvāsaham ('Sacred utterance'), worships Siva as 'Father . . . our Sovereign who came down in grace and made e'en me to be His very own,' yet the impersonal advaitism is not far to seek; 'Being art Thou, non-being too . . . men dance like puppets with their foolish thoughts of "I", and "Mine".'<sup>2</sup> Saivism came under the spell of Vedāntic monism even more than did Vaisnavism, and as Siva became more and more passive and impersonal (though never entirely so) his female consort came into prominence as the divine energy (*śakti*). The left-hand Sāktas became the victims

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Macfie, *The Ramayan of Tulsi Das*, pp. 252, 99, 123.

<sup>2</sup> Kingsbury and Phillips, *Hymns of the Tamil Saivite Saints*, pp. 91 and 93.

of antinomianism, a not uncommon outcome of some forms of extreme pantheism.

The belief in divine personality was supported vigorously by Ramanuja. His system is called *visishtādvaita* or qualified advaitism. The self (*ātman*) of man is not ultimately identical with Brāhman as Sancara affirmed, but an eternal mode (*prakāra*) of his being, having an individual life of its own. The Supreme Being can be justifiably addressed as Isvara or Personal Lord for He possesses a unity of consciousness (in and through his modes) as well as the souls, who are conscious modes of his divine life. The universe is also a mode of the divine being. It will be seen that the teaching of Ramanuja in spite of its personalism, is not unlike that of Spinoza, who is regarded in the West as the father of pantheism. The personality of God is experienced in and through the divine modes, and the personality of man is not the gift to him of substantial being, i.e., personality as a subject with attributes, but the relationship of mode or attribute to the substantial being of God.

#### (g) PERSONALITY OF GOD: THE HOLY TRINITY— CHRISTIANITY

‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father’ (John xiv, 9). These words of our Lord to Philip sum up the Christian position. The divine nature is known, so far as man can know it through the Revelation of God in Christ. The Christian church is built upon the rock of St. Peter’s confession, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God’ (Matthew xvi, 16). His Person, Life, Work

and Teaching reveal to us what God is like. The Christian doctrine of God, therefore, rests on the doctrine of Revelation already discussed in the first chapter. The personality of God, as Father, His holiness and love were revealed in no uncertain terms by the Life and atoning Death of Jesus. God's fatherly providence is seen to be extended to all, 'the just and the unjust' alike (universal Fatherhood); He is known as Father in a more intimate sense to the disciple who has received the 'adoption of sons' (ideal Fatherhood); and in this deeper revelation of grace, God is known as the Father of Jesus in a unique sense (unique Fatherhood).

This Revelation of God came first to those who were heirs of the prophetic message of the unity of God, the ethical monotheism of the Old Testament. The Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the expression of this conviction of the divine unity in the light of the belief that Jesus is the Son of God revealing the Father in a unique and ideal sense, and bestowing on man the power of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is thus the fuller revelation of the character of the divine unity, as the result of the Incarnation. God is one and yet there are three distinctions within that Unity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Christian Church gave expression to the Biblical teaching by affirming explicitly what, it is held, was already implicit in the Sacred record, viz., the belief in 'one and the same Godhead in the hypostases of three Persons of equal honour and of equal power, namely, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' (Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381). The prevailing formula 'one God in three hypostases

or Persons' guarded against Tritheism (the belief in three Gods), and Sabellianism (the belief in three aspects or modes of one God). The unity of God is not the association of three gods together (which is polytheism), nor the bare unity of one God revealed in three aspects (a form of unitarianism), but a unity in which there are three co-equal and eternal subsistences. Each Person is expressive of the Godhead as a Whole, substantiating for us the belief in the Divine Personality, not in an impersonal unity behind a threefold personality; and also affirming the reality of a personal relationship between God and man.

Trinitarian theories have appeared in other religions, but they are all either tritheistic or modalistic (Sabellian). The Babylonian cosmic trinity 'Anu-Bel-Ea' (Heaven, Earth and Water) is tritheistic, also the Egyptian family grouping of Osiris-Isis-Horus, as Father, Mother and Son, and the Taoist 'Three Pure Ones' of Lao-tze-P'anku-Yü Huang Shang ti already mentioned.

The Hindu *Trimurti* of Brahma-Vishnu-Siva (Creator, Preserver, Destroyer) was the fruit of an unsuccessful attempt to unite the sectarian movements of Hinduism. In origin the *Trimurti* is a tritheism, Vishnu is worshipped as a separate deity and Siva likewise. In Christianity the Divine Son reveals the Father, and bestows Himself in the Spirit, i.e., a fundamental unity is understood. But Vishnu, the second member of the *Trimurti*, does not reveal the first (Brāhma) nor has he any relationship to the third (Siva). The higher thought of India has, indeed, interpreted the *Trimurti* on metaphysical lines, but its teaching has little influence on sectarian

worship. This interpretation is Sabellian, viz., the unconditioned Brāhman becomes temporally conditioned with qualities, true only for the lower knowledge, hence it appears at one time as Brāhma, at another as Vishnu and again as Siva. But Brāhman alone is real, the three deities of the *Trimurti* are only phases of the divine being.

The Buddhist Trikaṃya (three bodies) is, in its normal idealistic form, another Sabellian Trinity; the one Buddha Absolute appearing on any of three planes, as Truth, as Sublime Ideal, or as Human Teacher.

Christianity maintains that God is personal. The personality of God cannot, of course, mean the limited and naturally imperfect personality of man, but it does mean a fact of which human personality is a similitude, involving the reality of a spiritual and ethical relationship between man and God, of prayer and communion, and of the fruition of the eternal vision of God. In view of this belief what is true of each Person is true of God as One, i.e., He is personal.

## CHAPTER III

### COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGY

A COSMOGONY is an account of the origin of the universe, a cosmology an account of its constitution.

The universe may be conceived of as existing eternally in its own right. In that case it has no origin and God is a finite Being, limited by it. An originated universe, on the other hand, can be thought of as an emanation from God or as created by Him. According to the conception of emanation the universe is regarded as having proceeded or evolved out of deity. Such a view may lead, as in Hinduism, to the belief that the universe is itself divine (pantheism) or to a belief, such as that of Shinto, that the divine is the universe (naturalism). In either case there is an emphasis on the divine immanence, but the first view tends to lose the world in God (pantheistic acosmism), the second tends to lose God in the world (pancosmism). According to the theory of creation, the universe is thought of as having been brought into existence by a supreme omnipotent being who transcends it. This emphasis on creation, and its correlative doctrine of divine transcendence, appears in Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. Such a belief conserves the conviction that there is an eternal Supreme Being, untouched by the change and decay of the universe, on whom it depends, and who is the permanent source of spiritual and ethical

values. Cosmogony and cosmology are, therefore, related to one another. A true view of creation involves a true view of the constitution of the universe, and its meaning and significance for us.

Creation, in some less developed forms of belief, means the formation of the universe out of a previously existing material. This view implies a limitation of the divine nature, and does not, therefore, guarantee the ultimate supremacy of spiritual and moral values. The conviction of the highest religions that the ultimate ground of all things is limited by nothing alien to it, has given rise to the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, the bringing into being, by the divine power, of something not previously existing. God alone exists from eternity as the source of eternal values and nothing limits His omnipotence. At the same time there is no denial of His immanence in the universe, for everything is due to the divine operation, and 'where God acts there He is.'

While the theory of creation maintains the belief in divine transcendence, that of emanation tends to emphasize divine immanence. That which emanates is itself divine, and issues from the deity without purpose. Hence an emanational event is more commonly thought of as due to a divine necessity, without a purpose or end. We do not, therefore, find in emanational systems, such as Taoism or Hinduism, a clear teleology. Events just happen as expressions of the divine life, they do not manifest a movement to a goal, and they recur monotonously in world cycles. On the other hand a transcendent creator is normally thought of as impressing his thought on creation, or otherwise



giving it a purpose by an act of the divine will. It has a *telos* or end towards which it progresses.

(a) EMANATION (NON-TELEOLOGICAL)

(i) *Shintoism—polytheistic pancosmism.*

The cosmogony of Japan is to be found in the *Kojiki*, and repeated in the *Nihongi* with many variations on the original theme. The narrative is a naïve and grotesque mythology, from which can be read an attempt to understand both supreme beings and creation as having evolved or emanated out of a primordial void. The *Kojiki* opens with the spontaneous generation of three deities out of the primæval void—the Heavenly-Central-Lord, the Supreme-Producing-Deity, and the Divine-Producing-Deity. These deities ‘hid their persons,’ i.e., disappeared, leaving room for others. The name Musubi-no-Kami (Production or Growth Deity) appearing in the titles of the second and third deities, suggests a primitive evolutionary idea. The title Musubi-no-kami also appears in Shinto as a separate deity meaning, according to Aston, ‘the abstract process of growth personified—that is, a power immanent in nature and not external to it.’ The earliest gods evolved out of chaos, and, as signified by the name ‘Musubi,’ were also regarded as the cause of growth.

The narrative proceeds to relate that two other deities appeared spontaneously, like a reed-shoot and ‘hid their persons.’ The myth of divine birth from plant life is common in primitive religion, and is again suggestive of the divine activity as the personification of the evolutionary process.

Other deities appeared and vanished, followed by five pairs culminating with Izanagi (male) and Izanami (female). With these two deities the main account of the cosmogony begins. The heavenly deities bade Izanagi and Izanami to 'make, consolidate and give birth to the drifting land.' Thereupon, standing on the 'floating bridge of heaven' (the rainbow), they thrust down the heavenly jewelled spear, and by stirring up the brine, formed an island to which they descended. There they gave birth, by parental embrace, to the various islands of Japan and numerous nature deities—waters, herbs, trees, mountains and food. Izanami's last child—Ho-musubi ('fire-growth') seems to mean the sun's heat which 'makes things grow' (Hirata), but in excess destroys. Her child, therefore, caused her Mother's death, but, before passing away, Izanami produced the elements, metal, water and clay. Izanagi in anger slew Ho-musubi, thereby generating another company of deities, and entered the land of Yomi (Hades) in search of his wife. The horror of the underworld caused him to return as quickly as possible to the light of day, where he bathed in the sea to purify himself from its pollution, and generated in the process more deities. From his left eye, according to one account, was born Amaterasu, the Sun-goddess, from the right eye the Moon-god, from his nostrils the Storm God. Amaterasu became supreme among the deities, and from her there descended the monarchs of the realm.

These myths are evidently an attempt to explain the origin of things as a process of growth. Gods and nature are hardly distinguished. First they

appear spontaneously, and then by procreation, or by magical emanation (e.g., Amaterasu from the right eye of Izanagi), deities and natural objects, all designated *kami*, come to birth. From the deities there apparently descended mankind and from the supreme deity (Amaterasu) the ruling house.

The dualism of China has also influenced the narratives. In the *Nihongi* it appears as an account of the separation of Heaven and Earth, a myth common to primitive religion. A chaotic mass separates into two, the lighter part forming heaven, the heavier part forming the earth. From the two there emanate divine beings and nature.

This Shinto view of the emanation of all things from a primitive state has led to a nature worship with materialistic tendencies. The divine is manifested in nature and man. The gods are indeed august and superior, but their nature is too much like that of men to be *sui generis*. There is an emphasis on nature itself being divine (polytheistic pancosmism) rather than on the divine as a transcendent spiritual principle informing nature. In modern Shintoism this has brought about a religion with a materialistic and humanitarian trend. As is usual with emanation theories there is no clear meaning or purpose in creation. Like Topsy it 'grow'd.' The cosmogony is associated with a non-teleological cosmology.

(ii) *Confucianism (Scholastic) and Hinduism (Sāṃkhya)*  
—*dualistic.*

The most developed cosmology of China is the dualistic system of Yang and Yin which, as we have already observed, holds that two opposite principles,

acting in a harmonious manner, account for all the furniture and phenomena of the universe.

Chao-yung (A.D. 1011-1077) elaborated the theory of the evolution of the universe from an original chaos, and its return, after a great cosmic cycle, to its primordial state. The notion of emanation is associated again with a non-teleological theory of the universe.

Chou-tuni, about the same time, also regarded the dualism as originating or emanating from a prior state, the 'Great ultimate or origin' (*t'ai-chi*). This primordial principle was in a condition of gyration, the centrifugal movement of which produced a severance, so that the heavier part precipitated to form the earth (Yin) and the lighter part remained in suspension as the heaven (Yang).

The scholastic system of Chu Hsi, a little later, is the classic of this neo-Confucian development. The cosmogony and cosmology is a dualistic one of *li* and *ch'i*, already dealt with under the conception of Reality. These two principles, originally existing in a potential undifferentiated state, emanate into the actualized or evolved universe. The higher principle of *li*, ethical in character, produces in the sphere of *ch'i* (the material vehicle) the variety of the universe, with its positive and negative forms of Yang and Yin. The ethical character of *li* prevents the cosmology from being a gross materialism. The supreme ethical character of *li* is seen at its best in man, but its 'ethical' character is also seen in nature. The sleep of winter with its potential stores of natural wealth is analogous to 'wisdom,' the fertility and growth of spring is analogous to *jên* or 'love,' the natural beauty of summer is akin to 'reverence' and

the fruit of autumn is 'utility' and 'righteousness.' This universe of Yang and Yin, which emanated out of the primordial state, is destined, after a long cycle, to regress to its former condition, giving birth again to a new heaven and earth. There is no finality, no supreme goal, but the repetition of cosmic cycles.

In a popular form the dualism of Yang and Yin has become a working theory of Taoist philosophy, and the magical system of *feng-shui* (wind and water = natural philosophy) induces people to consult a Taoist adept before building a house or burying a corpse, lest the unseen spirits prove a source of danger. Instead of a religion of hope, inspired by a worthy goal, we find a religion in which fear cramps initiative.

Popular mythology also preserves an account of creation by a kind of demiurge, the first being P'an-ku, who chiselled the cosmos out of a pre-existing chaotic material. A more ultimate belief in emanation is, however, suggested even by this creative myth, in that P'an-ku proceeded out of a cosmic egg. Another emanational form of the myth says that, after his death, his body was transformed into the various parts of the world. There is no authoritative doctrine of creation in relation to the monarchical deity Shang-ti (T'ien), but the classics refer to him as having given birth to mankind (*Shu Ching* IV, 2, 2; *Shih Ching: Major Odes* III, 6).

The Hindu Sāmkhya system of philosophy is also a dualistic emanation. The universe is an emanation from *prakriti*, an original primordium or material matrix, due to the influx into it of the

spiritual principle *purusha*. The proximity of *purusha* to *prakriti* gives rise to the psychological organs, all of which (except *purusha*) are material in character, perceiving a material universe. This universe is not pure illusion<sup>1</sup> (as with the Vedānta), for it arises out of *prakriti*—*ex nihilo nihil fit*. But the universe has no real worth, and so long as a man fails to discriminate between the passionless *purusha* and the world of movement and becoming, the *purusha* is in bondage to matter, and the individual is subject to suffering. When the 'illusion' of non-discrimination is dispelled from a creature, *purusha* is released and the universe, as perceived, ceases to exist. When all *purushas* are released, *prakriti* reverts to its quiescent state, and the whole process of evolution and involution repeats itself. The doctrine of emanation, as we have seen in other contexts, is linked up with the belief in world-cycles without any teleology or finality.

### (iii) *Taoism—monistic.*

The original Taoism of Lao-tze regards the universe as the expression of an ultimate monistic principle ('Tao'). Its coming into being is not due to any purpose or end, but is spontaneous action. Tao is nature's originator, 'the mother of all things' (*Tao-teh-Ching* I, 1) and nature's indweller, 'all-pervading is the Great Tao, all things depend upon it for life' (XXXIV, 1). Tao, as known in its effects, sprang from the eternal Tao, which cannot be expressed in words. 'Existence sprang from It as non-existent' (XL, 2).

<sup>1</sup> Cowell, *Sarva Darsana Samgraha*, p. 226.

Chuang-tze also, like his master, regarded Tao as the originator of heaven and earth. 'From Tao came the mysterious existences of spirits, from It the mysterious existence of God. It produced heaven; It produced earth. It was before the *T'ai chi*' (VI, 7). As with Lao-tze Tao existed before God. Chuang-tze even regards it as before *T'ai chi*, the primary plenum or ether out of which Yang and Yin proceeded. The genesis of things was an evolution not a creation. 'In the Grand Beginning of all things there was nothing in all the vacancy of space; there was nothing that could be named. It was in this state that there arose the first existence . . . without bodily shape . . . that which had no bodily shape was divided . . . the two processes continuing in operation, things were produced' (XII, 8). The two processes are Yang and Yin. The *Tao-teh-Ching* had already said 'Tao produced unity; unity produced duality; duality produced trinity; and trinity produced the innumerable objects' (XLII, 1). The duality is the Yang and Yin, which is often referred to by Chuang-tze as a later emanation from the monistic principle of Tao. In the magical methods of later Taoism the Yang and Yin theory has played a great part.

This cosmogony and cosmology is a purposeless process and the idea of an ethical end is deprecated by Lao-tze and Chuang-tze for passive surrender to the spontaneous autonomy of Tao. Hence again there appears the doctrine of the recurring cycle; 'when the Nature has been cultivated it returns to its proper character; and when that has been fully reached, there is the same condition as at the Beginning' (Chuang-tze XII, 8).

(iv) *Hinduism—Pantheistic acosmism.*

Hinduism, like Taoism, teaches an emanational and not a creative cosmogony. The idea of transformation or evolution appears in the late hymn of the *Rig-Veda* (X, 90), which relates how Purusha the divine male is immolated, and from his body there proceeds the Vedas, the castes, and the universe; 'in truth Purusha is all this, what is and what is to be.' Two late hymns of the *Rig-Veda* are devoted to Visvakarman ('doer of all acts'), the universal Father. He arose from the world-egg floating on the primæval waters of chaos, and generated the universe. One hymn honours Prajāpati ('lord of offspring'). In the *Brāhmanas*, Prajāpati is the procreative source of all things, represented as saying 'May I become Many' and by practising austerity he generated these worlds. Another late Vedic hymn (X, 129) speaks of a time when 'there was neither nothing nor manifest being. . . . One breathed without breath, by its own nature'—the link between being unmanifest, and being manifest.

The *Upanishads* put Brāhman in the place of Prajāpati. 'Would that I were many! Let me procreate myself' (*Tait* II, 6). Thus by austerity he generates the universe. This account personifies Brāhman as a being distinct from his offspring. But the personification is only metaphorical, for the narrative represents Brāhman as entering into creation after he had given it being, so that it becomes one with it (*Tait*). The process is a pantheistic evolution. There is only one Reality 'just Being, without a second' (*Chānd*) or 'Brāhman' (*Bṛihad* I, 4, 10) who entered in here, even to



the finger-nail tips, as a razor is hidden in a razor case (I, 4, 7), i.e., the universe emanated from Brāhman and he became one with it. The universe is said to proceed from Brāhman like a web from the spider or as sparks from the fire, the product itself being an expression of the divine life (II, 1, 20).

At first it is held that the universe itself *is* Brāhman (*Chānd* III, 14, 1). But Brāhman is 'One,' and the World is 'Many.' The One cannot be identical with the Many. It is thought, therefore, that, as One, Brāhman is above the world, as Many, he is immanent in it (*Isa* V); or three-fourths of Brāhman are immortal in the sky, one-fourth is immanent as the universe (*Chānd* III, 12, 5). The view that eventually prevailed was that the One alone is Real, therefore the universe is *māyā* or illusion (*Svētas* IV, 10). This world is such stuff as dreams are made of.

Sancara starts from this point, and gives a twofold account of the cosmology according to the metaphysical and empirical point of view. For the higher knowledge of the metaphysical point of view Brāhman is One, without a second, and so there is no real universe, no cosmogony. But for the lower empirical knowledge there is a cosmogony; the universe is an outpouring or emission (*srīṣhti*) from Brāhman. This emanation of the universe from Brāhman is followed eventually by its reabsorption into Brāhman, and a countless number of cosmic cycles are repeated again and again. From the empirical point of view there is monotonous repetition and souls eternally transmigrate from world to world as a recompense for their deeds.

The *Weltanschauung* is an idealistic one. For the

universe is a mental construction. And so long as there are rebirths, or minds, so virtually is there a universe existing for those minds. After each world-cycle another universe emanates, as the fruit of the deeds committed by souls in an earlier cosmic cycle. But for the man who has attained to the saving knowledge of identity with Brāhman, there is no longer any rebirth and hence no longer any universe. For *vidyā* (knowledge) there is only Brāhman, from which standpoint the universe is illusion, due to *avidyā* or ignorance.

Ramanuja, who maintains the actual existence of the universe even for the higher knowledge, in opposition to Sancara's acosmism, retains the theory of emanation. The world is an eternal mode of Brāhman comprised in him in a 'refined form,' unfolded and drawn back into deity, alternately in ever repeated cosmic cycles.

Hindu cosmology has no teleology. The recurring evolution and involution of the universe is designated *lila*, the 'sport' or 'play' of deity. Dr. Otto sums up the significance of Hindu cosmology by saying that India lacks 'entirely' even for Ramanuja 'the positive *evaluation* of the world . . . India gives no genuine *worth* to the world because it knows nothing of a *goal* of the world.'<sup>1</sup>

The Law of Manu (c. B.C. 200 to A.D. 200), the highest legal authority, also opens with a view of the evolution of the universe from the *ovum mundi*, which emanated from the thought of the Self-Existent. The Sectarian *Puranas* (fourth century A.D. onwards) also contain accounts in a similar strain of the emanation of the universe from Brāh-

<sup>1</sup> *India's Religion of Grace*, p. 73.

man, through the intermediate stage of the *ovum mundi*, and the re-emanation of new world ages without any finality.

(v) *Buddhism (Mahāyāna)*—*idealistic*.

Gautama seems to have originally discredited speculation as to the nature of the universe on the ground that it hindered the real problem of life; release from suffering. Speculation as to whether the universe is infinite or finite, eternal or non-eternal was forbidden, and an agnostic attitude maintained. In any event there was no personal creator, nor was the cosmic process a mere materialism. The world was accepted as a seemingly objective universe, but the belief that ignorance and craving caused the false notion of individuality was followed by the belief that ignorance and craving caused the notion of an objective universe. Hence as the idea of a self was a mental construction, so the objectivity of the universe was regarded as a mental construction, and the early atomism of the Sarvastivadins, which posited the reality of an external world, was followed by the Mādhyamika affirmation that there were no objective self-existing entities.

An objective universe, however, was, in some way, reinstated by the belief in the objective reality of an ideal Absolute, of which the universe is an appearance. The cosmos on this view has at least a relative existence, and the way was open for speculation as to its character. The world was divided into the three regions of:—

(1) *Kāma*, or desire. This includes the earth and its hells below, and the lower heavens.

(2) *Rūpa*, or form. Here are the Brāhma heavens

in which the lower states of desire are exterminated.

(3) *Arūpa*, or formlessness. In this world all desire is exterminated and an ideal existence subsists in its purest state.

On the pattern of this triple world there were conceived countless hosts of universes grouped in Chiliocosms! To this account Mahāyāna Buddhism adds that a perfectly enlightened Bodhisattva or Saint emanates a spiritual realm (*Buddha Ksetra*) through which he enlightens others on the plane of truth (Dharmakaya) or the body of bliss (Sambhogakaya).

Ultimately, however, the Absolute alone exists, more real than the *Buddha Ksetra*, or planes of reality. Cosmology therefore belongs to the 'world' of appearance. An attempt, however, is made to retain the actuality of the universe by affirming that the Absolute, though alone real, does not exist apart from particular things. Nevertheless, the universe is relative and, in its nature, as a manifold of separate existences, it imperfectly expresses the Absolute Buddha Spirit. As in Hinduism, so in the higher thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism, there is no positive evaluation of the universe as such. Dr. Suzuki insists, however, to-day, that we must 'accept this world of pluralities' as a condition of realizing that this 'dualistically-conditioned existence' is not final.<sup>1</sup>

### (b) CREATION (TELEOLOGICAL)

#### (i) *Zoroastrianism (Magian)—dualistic.*

The cosmogony of Zoroastrianism presupposes the idea of creation. The words used of the

<sup>1</sup> *Faiths and Fellowships*, pp. 42-3.

creative activity of Ahura Mazda (*da* 'to establish,' *thwares* 'to cut,' *tas* 'to form') imply the bringing into being of fresh forms out of a pre-existing material. There is no idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, though it may be urged that *da* can mean, at least in some passages, actual creation *ex nihilo*.<sup>1</sup> The idea of God as a personal being transcending the universe appears and is consistent with the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. In one passage of the *Bundahish* it is indeed more clearly implied. Ahura Mazda is said to create 'not forming the future out of the past' (lit. 'what becomes out of what was').<sup>2</sup> A complete doctrine of *ex nihilo* would, however, imply that there existed before creation only God, and the dualistic trend of Zoroastrianism prevented such a doctrine from developing.

The subject of dualism has already been discussed, the conclusion being that the *Gāthas* are on the borders of monotheism, while later Magian theology is dualistic in character. According to the *Gāthas* Ahura Mazda created all things (XLIV, 7), while one of the twin-spirits established 'not-life.' The later *Yasna* XXXVII, 1, ascribes to Ahura Mazda the creation of all that is good, e.g., cattle, right, waters, plants, light and the earth. According to the *Vendīdād* he is responsible for the good creation, Ahriman counter-creating all that is evil. The Amesha Spentas and fravashis are also referred to as creators, but these, in their turn, were creatures of the good deity.<sup>3</sup> Ahriman, on the other hand, is not said to be a 'creature' of the good deity.

<sup>1</sup> L. H. Gray, E.R.E., IV, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> S.B.E., Vol. V, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> S.B.E., Vol. IV, p. 212; Vol. XXIII, p. 187.

The Zoroastrian view of the universe is, however, in any case, teleological, whether Gathic or Magian. The conflict with evil is a winning battle, the world in which it is fought is a real world, and all things are leading up to the great age of 'Renovation,' the final victory of good over evil.

The cosmology of the *Bundahish* is divided into four periods of 3,000 years each. In the first period Auharmazd brought into being a spiritual creation, and Ahriman created a host of demons. In the second period the material universe was created by Auharmazd, while in the third Ahriman infected it with blight and disease, slaying the primaeval ox and the primaeval man. The fourth period, in which we are now living, dates from the advent of Zarathushtra and looks forward to the coming of Saoshyant (Messiah) and the triumph of good over evil. The teleological conception of a future Messianic age gives optimism to a world view which might well give cause for pessimism. Finally the demonic hosts will be cast into the abyss, their appropriate abode, while Auharmazd reigns in eternal light.

Such a dualistic view of creation accounts for the existence of evil without prejudicing the ethical holiness of God, but at the cost of prejudicing his supremacy. Can we be sure in the nature of things that Ahura Mazdah will win? On the other hand an unambiguous belief in creation *ex nihilo* would guarantee the conviction that the creator is supreme and as such would be supreme over the forces of evil. Nevertheless, the Zoroastrian belief in 'creation' rather than 'emanation' does allow for teleology and there is room for faith that right will

overcome might. The universe (apart from Ahriman's evil influence) is a 'creature' of God with potentialities for casting off evil and becoming like him, and is not a mere mechanical emanation.

(ii) *Judaism and Islam—Monotheistic* (ex nihilo)

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' So opens the well-known Biblical narrative of creation, according to the Priestly Code (P) with its monotheistic view of God, the corner stone of Jewish belief. This creation story has not entirely freed itself from a feature of the oriental ritual pattern, viz., a pre-existing chaos, but it readily lends itself to a view of creation *ex nihilo*. The Hebrew *bārā* (to create) is used exclusively of divine activity in the Bible, and assumes an element of novelty or emergence (cf. Isaiah xlviii, 6 sq.). In the earlier J narrative from Chapter ii, 4b onwards, the word *āsāh* (to make) is used, and man is said to have been 'formed' (*yātsar*) from dust, on the analogy of the alluvial deposit at the mouth of the Euphrates. But the P narrative gives us the picture of a great transcendent deity producing things by a command of his unfettered will. 'And God said, let there be light and there was light.' It is not till we reach the apocryphal 2 Maccabees vii, 28, that we find what seems to be a reference to *creatio ex nihilo*. 'God made them not of things that were.' Nevertheless, deutero-Isaiah is not far behind. 'I am the Lord and there is none else . . . I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am the Lord that doeth all these things' (xlv, 5-7); chaos and darkness are not pre-existent, but God's creation.

The Book of Proverbs assumes that it is the divine wisdom which pre-exists creation, its handiwork (viii, 30), an idea developed yet further in the Wisdom of Solomon (vii, 22). Wisdom, as master workman, becomes almost a distinct hypostasis within the Godhead. This tendency to personify Wisdom as an agent in creation reaches its climax in the Logos theology of Philo. Philo, under Hellenic influence, held that matter was eternal and evil, so that God, who is Perfect Being, cannot be conceived as coming into contact with it. The theory of a pre-existent matter has therefore returned, and a creative Logos (as a 'Son of God' or 'second God') bridges over the chasm between Pure Being and impure matter.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of the Logos and other mediatorial powers (*logoi*) paves the way for the entry of the Neoplatonic theory of emanation. But instead of emanations spanning the gap between the Infinite and an already existing finite, emanations, in the Jewish Kabbāla, are expressions of the Infinite in a finite form so that there is no finite being apart from them. This cosmology is a pantheistic one, and the universe becomes nothing less than a series of emanations from the Eternal (*En Sof*). Ibn Gabirol (1021-1058), the scholar to whose philosophy the Kabbālists appealed, really avoided this extreme conclusion by positing the divine Will, as an aspect of deity, which *caused* the distinction of matter and form existing in the intelligences which emanate from deity.

Orthodox Judaism kept free from extreme

<sup>1</sup> *Quis rerum divinarum heres* 32 (i, 495). Vide Bigg *Christian Platonists*, p. 35—as distinct from *matter* there was a time when the *cosmos* was not.



mysticism, and held strictly to the doctrine of God as the personal transcendent creator who brought all things into existence from nothing. Maimonides set out to reconcile the Bible with Aristotle. He maintained that the arguments for and against *creatio ex nihilo* were equally balanced, and so felt that he could fairly depart from the teaching of the philosopher in favour of the orthodox exegesis of Revelation as *ex nihilo* (*Guide to the Perplexed*, Part II, Chapter XVI). Modern Judaism accepts the view that God 'is the cause of the primitive matter, and of the original chaos. For He has created the world out of nothing.'<sup>1</sup>

Consistently with its view of creation the ancient Hebrew religion was informed by an invincible hope that God would, in due time, bring in a Kingdom of righteousness. This belief in a future vindication of divine justice was expressed in various ways as the 'day of the Lord,' as a Messianic age of peace, or as a day of victory and salvation for Israel. This teleological view of history is continued in the teaching of Maimonides, whose twelfth article expresses 'perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah.' The belief in a personal Messiah has become dim in the course of time, but the conviction of providential guidance has given vitality to the belief that Israel is charged with the mission of keeping alive a pure ethical monotheism. We have already observed that such a teleological view of life normally accompanies the belief in 'creation,' dependent on God, rather than the belief in pantheistic 'emanation' already divine.

Muhammedanism, like Judaism, teaches a personal

<sup>1</sup> Friedländer, *The Jewish Religion*, p. 30.

idea of God who transcends the universe He has created. The influence of the Old Testament is seen in the belief that God created the heavens and the earth in six days (Sura VII, 52; XXXII, 2), that creation was good, and that into man, formed from clay, He breathed his spirit (XXXII, 8). The creation of seven heavens and seven earths (LXV, 12) shews oriental influence; Iranian and Babylonian (Gāthas XXXII, 3, etc.).

The universe is not an emanation from God, but the work of a wise creator. God created it by a divine fiat, 'his command when He willeth aught, is but to say to it "be" and it is' (XXXVI, 82). The divine *amr* ('command' 'bidding') comes down through his creation. The created universe is not an arbitrary product of the divine will. Allah brought it into being to set forth his beneficence (LXXI, 12) and truth (XLVI, 2); it is a sign to man of the divine activity (XLII, 28), effected by God for a worthy end (XXX, 7). As there is a beginning to the universe, so will there be an end. The *Qur'an* teaches an eschatology as well as a cosmogony. It will continue for a 'fixed time' (XXX, 7), as a witness to the divine rule (LXXXVIII, 17), and at the day of reckoning, when men will appear before Allah, the great judge of all, He will cause the world to return again (i.e., come to an end) with the ease with which it is brought forth. Islam like Zoroastrianism and Judaism teaches a doctrine of creation and a doctrine of an end. The universe does not appear and disappear in endless cycles, but is directed towards the final purpose of divine judgment and the vindication of true belief.

The history of theology is, however, a story of the conflict between 'emanational' and 'creation' theories issuing in the victory for the latter. The development of Islamic theology, on the subject of creation, is an attempt to reconcile the Aristotelian conception of the eternity of matter with the Quranic belief in divine creation, leading to the final orthodox victory of belief in *creatio ex nihilo*. The teaching is somewhat confusing, because Neoplatonic ideas were erroneously thought to be Aristotelian. The accepted *Theology of Aristotle* was actually an abridgement of the last three books of Plotinus' *Enneads*.

The rationalist school of the Mutazilites first awakened Islam to the need of a reasoned theology. Abu Hudhayl Muhammed al-Allaf (ninth century) tried to reconcile Quranic belief with Aristotle by asserting that, before creation, the universe existed in eternal quiescence and stillness without the logical categories which make it an existing thing for our experience. Creation applies to change or movement whereby the potential becomes actual, and the universe begins to exist in time and space. At the end of the world it will return again to the state of eternal quiescence. An Nazzam (d. A.D. 845) held, in deference to Aristotle, that God had created all things at once in remote eternity, and retained them in concealment until it was time for each to appear in the arena of visible being. Thumama ibn Ashras (d. A.D. 828) somewhat sceptically abandoned any attempt to reconcile Aristotle and the *Qur'an* by saying frankly that the universe is eternal, like God. The universe is not 'created by the will' of God but is the necessary expression of

the divine nature eternally produced or 'created' by Him.

The Mutazilites were primarily theologians, but there were also famous philosophers whose studies led them to theology. Al Kindi (*d.* A.D. 873) the only well-known philosopher of Arabic blood, was a great exponent of Aristotle, who went direct to the Greek text, but interpreted the philosopher through the medium of the Neoplatonic *Theology of Aristotle*, falsely ascribed to him. His importance, therefore, is the emphasis he laid on the emanation of the 'agent intellect' in epistemology and cosmology. The philosopher Al-Farabi (*d.* 950) tried to shew that Aristotle and the *Qur'an* were at one if it were recognized that 'creation' meant something different for each. For Aristotle the 'eternity of matter' meant the creation by God, through the operation of the 'agent intellect,' of the universe, in timeless eternity, but for the *Qur'an* 'creation' meant the introduction by God of succession and time into this timeless creation, making possible the emergence or emanation of the universe from unmeasured eternity. 'The Brotherhood of purity' was a religious society which developed this emanational view to its extreme, producing a pantheism that broke away from Quranic doctrine. On Neoplatonic lines God is the unknowable τὸ ὄν from whom emanates 'intellect' (*ʿaql*), the universal soul, and primal matter capable of receiving dimensions and so of producing the universe. The brilliant philosophy of Ibn Sina (Avicenna, *d.* 1037) marks the final cleavage between philosophy and theology. In his teaching, however, the emanational view of creation is preserved from pure pantheism by the

assertion that God alone is 'necessary being' in the absolute sense, all other actuality being 'contingent' or 'necessary by derivation' from God. Ibn Rushd (Averroes, *d.* 1198) is the last of the great Aristotelian philosophers of Islam. The eternity of the world finds its justification in the eternity of God. He is the actualization and essence of the ceaseless movement of the universe which represents the continual search in time for finality. God is not conceived of as an external cause bringing the universe into being *ex nihilo*, but as the eternal emanational cause of the universe, the unchanging essence of the movement. The Sufi mysticism, as is to be expected, also held to the doctrine of emanation. Ibn al-Arabi (*d.* 1240) the arch-Sufi, opposed the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. The universe is an emanation from deity. Ultimately, however, it is illusion, for God is the only reality and all things are in Him.

In distinction from the pantheistic tendencies of Neoplatonism orthodox theology clung tenaciously to the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Al Ashari (ob. *c.* 941) held that the world and all it contained was created by God *ex nihilo*, and this remains the orthodox view in Muhammedanism. In this way the transcendent and absolute character of God is preserved. The complete triumph of Asharite theology was due to the work of Al Ghazali. He not only maintained, in all clarity, the view of a transcendent creator who gave being *ex nihilo* to created things by an act of his will, but also retained a doctrine of immanence akin to the Neoplatonic illumination. Thus the doctrine of a transcendent creator was warmed by a qualified Sufi element that avoided

pantheism, and the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of matter was definitely set aside in favour of Quranic revelation.

(c) CREATION: MONOTHEISM (TRINITARIAN)—  
CHRISTIANITY

Christianity, together with Judaism and Islam, has interpreted the divine creative act as *ex nihilo*. This doctrine appears in the writings of the Apologists of the second century, Tatian, Athenagoras and Theophilus, but the notion of a formless matter out of which the world was formed also appears. The Shepherd of Hermas (c. A.D. 130) refers to creation 'from not-being,' but if the phrase means 'potential being' the reference is ambiguous. St. Athanasius (fourth century), however, quotes Hermas in *De Incarnatione* in support of the *ex nihilo* doctrine. Irenaeus, at the end of the second century, for the first time gives clear expression to the belief and 'early in the third century it had become the prevailing theory in the Christian Church. God had created matter. He was not merely the Architect of the universe, but its Source.'<sup>1</sup>

Christianity sets the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* against the notion of dualism and pure emanation. Dualism affirms that matter or evil is independent of God, creation from nothing affirms that there is nothing whatever which does not owe its existence to the creator. Emanation involves the idea that what is produced has an identity of nature with the Producer, creation from nothing emphasises the difference between the creature and the Creator.

<sup>1</sup> Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 197.

Emanation is consistent with pantheism, but creation allows for the relative independence of created things, and, for man, a measure of freedom as a personal subject in his own right. *Creatio est productio rei ex nihilo sui et subjecti*. Emanation also involves the idea of necessity, whether mechanical or logical, but creation holds that the universe is the effect of divine choice. God is responsible for its coming into being by an act of His will. Creation out of 'nothing' does not mean the violation of the second law of thought (not-A = A) the mere magical appearance of 'something' out of 'nothing,' for God already exists and, by virtue of his infinite power and love, he gives being to the world which did not exist anterior to this creative act—a finite effect from an Infinite Cause. God is not identified with it, nor in the same class with it, but transcends it. If the universe were eventually to cease functioning as the law of entropy seems to indicate, or if, in any other way, it came to an end, God the eternal Ground would still exist unimpaired, as the Infinite Reality transcending it. The Christian conception of creation means not only the initial gift of being to creatures (cosmogony) but the dependence of the creature, at every moment, upon the Creator (cosmology), the continuance of the gift of being or 'preservation,' for 'in Him we live and move and have our being' (*Acts* xvii, 28).

Christ, as the Word or Reason of the Father, is the divine Agent in the work of creation. 'Without Him was not anything made that has been made' (*John* i, 3). 'In Him were all things created' (*Colossians* i, 16). Creation is, therefore, brought into relationship with Salvation. It is

fitting that He who created man should also re-create him by atoning grace. 'God made all things out of nothing,' wrote Athanasius, 'through His own Word, our Lord Jesus Christ,' and 'its re-creation has been wrought by the Word who originally made it' (*De Incarn.* 1 and 3).

Our Lord is also the goal to which all creation is moving. All things are summed up in Christ (Ephesians i, 10) for 'in Him all things consist' (Colossians i, 17). The Christian believes that there is a divine purpose working itself out in creation and history. This teleological view is of paramount importance. At the end of the world Christ will appear as judge, and, as Head of His kingdom, will vindicate the righteous (2 Timothy iv, 1). He who gave being to creation redeemed it by his sacrifice, and will consummate it with love and justice at the end of all things. The 'theological virtue' of hope rests on the conviction that Christ reigns in Glory and will appear at the 'consummation of the age' to fulfil his purpose for man.

Mystic writers, such as Erigena (ninth century), taught an emanational view of the origin of the universe, holding that God gave being to the world out of His own essence, but Anselm (eleventh century) avoids the pantheism of this view, by asserting that the eternal ideas which existed already in the divine mind were given individuality *ex nihilo* at creation. Aquinas (thirteenth century) likewise maintains that the eternal ideas are the exemplar forms of created beings, which latter are given existence from nothing (*Summa* 1, 44, 3; 1, 45, 1 and 2), using the term *emanatio* for a strict view of *creatio ex nihilo*. He also follows Maimonides in the



view that the reason cannot demonstrate either the eternity of the world or its beginning, for its existence depends upon the divine Will (I, 46, 1); and he accepts, from Revelation, the view that the world had a beginning, as an 'article of faith.' Christ is the Agent in creation as the eternal Image of the Father, the Wisdom and Thought of God. The Second Person of the Trinity, therefore, bears an operative relation to creatures. He spake and they were made *quia importatur in Verbo ratio factiva eorum quae Deus facit* (I, 34, 3).

This view represents, in the main, the prevailing view of Christianity. The biological theory of evolution has caused much discussion, in its relationship to creation, but it has not undermined the conviction of the transcendent creative activity of God *ex nihilo*. The fact of evolution indeed does not necessarily deny either the original or the continuous creative activity of God, as the efficient cause of all things *ab origine*, and of the emergence of new forms during the process.

## CHAPTER IV

### MAN AND THE GOOD LIFE

FROM the point of view of the doctrine of human nature religions fall into three classes. The first group emphasizes the natural capacity of man (Shintoism and Confucianism), the second identifies him in some way with a mystic principle (Taoism, Hinduism, Mahāyāna Buddhism), the third recognizes his need of God (Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Islam). The first-class teaches the natural goodness of man, the second fails to recognize adequately the natural man, the third is more aware of the natural man's weakness or sinfulness. Shintoism and Confucianism are therefore anthropocentric and humanistic, Taoism, Hinduism and Buddhism are mystic and de-humanistic, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Islam are theocentric. The religions falling into this third class vary in their interpretation of the divine-human relationship. Though they avoid the extremes of humanitarian or mystic religion, Zoroastrianism and Judaism emphasize the human side in the God-man relationship, while Islam stresses the divine at the cost of the human.

#### (a) ANTHROPOCENTRIC RELIGION

##### (i) *Shintoism—loyalty and patriotism*

There is no doctrine of man in the strict sense in Shintoism. The sacred documents make very little distinction between the gods and human beings.

The divine parents Izanagi and Izanami are completely human, and give birth to men and natural objects in crudely anthropomorphic ways. Man is not a being brought into existence or created by an act of the divine will, but by generation or magical emanation. The seen and unseen worlds form one family, of which the heavenly deities are the progenitors. Amaterasu, the offspring of Izanagi, becomes a supreme divine being, and men are to her as children. The Emperor is, however, in the direct line of descent from her, so that he is more closely associated with the heavenly beings than his subjects, and is, in a very special sense, divine. Mikados in the past have been honoured as gods, and to-day the reverence for the throne is the guiding principle of Shintoism. The cardinal virtue of Shintoism is loyalty, and State Shinto to-day is ostensibly little more than patriotism.

In view of this belief in the close relationship of gods and men, Shintoism has been described by the native writer, Genchi Kato, as 'theanthropic.' He writes, '*We see God in man and nature* is an expression of theanthropic religion in contrast with the expression *To see God above man and nature* . . . theanthropic religion may be termed homocentric, and theocratic religion deocentric.' The worship of the Emperor, he also reminds us, is the natural expression of such a religion. The worship of past heroes, who become deified, as well as ancestor worship, is also at home in theanthropic religion.

Shintoism is, therefore, humanitarian in tendency. As an emanation or descent from deity man is naturally divine and does not feel any great need for a Being diviner than himself.

Shinto psychology generally refers to man as possessing *iki* or 'breath,' not a separable soul but vitality. *Iki* is a humanistic term, though it may be raised to a higher status as *iki mitama* in ancestor worship. *Mitama* normally means the effluence of a deity present in the temple, but may mean the 'soul,' as the divine in man. The psychology of a higher and lower spirit in man comes from Chinese dualism. On this view *Kon* rules the mind, *haku* the body. There is little sense of the need of God, either here or hereafter. The after-life, according to the sacred documents, is an underworld of darkness and disease—the land of Yomi. Here dwell, not persons or spirits, but phantoms of the living. Pure Shinto to-day makes the best of this primitive view of the after-life, and endeavours to graft on to it a more spiritual account of the future existence.

As is to be expected in a humanitarian religion, there is little sense of sin or of the need for redemption. There is, indeed, only the barest skeleton of a moral code in the sacred literature. Evil acts displeasing to the gods are called *tsumi* or guilt, and are conceived of as contagious substances. The offences referred to in the *Oho-harahi*, or Ceremony of Great Purification, show no clear distinction between ritual impurity, bodily disease or ethical wrong. The wrong of cutting living or dead bodies, or the affliction of leprosy, are classed with incest and other ethical offences. The official moral offences are particular kinds of sexual impurity (not explicitly adultery), wounding, for wounds are unsightly (not necessarily murder), magical offences and certain interferences with agricultural operations, such as the breaking down of divisions between rice-

fields. There is no positive teaching on the good life, such being primarily the avoidance (*imi*) of the offences mentioned in the Purification ceremony.

Modern Shintoists have held that the lack of a clear moral code is evidence of the natural goodness of man. Having an inborn sense of the good, he can express it in life without the need of a code, and being closely related to the gods he is naturally good. Conscience is his code and he is his own redeemer. 'All man have intuition,' wrote Kaibara Ekken in the seventeenth century, 'a child loves his parents without being taught.'

Ekken, however, took over the doctrine of filial piety from Confucius, the Chinese sage, and we are reminded that the ethical ideals of Japan at their best were due to Buddhist and Confucian influence. Bushido, or 'military-knight-ways,' is a marked example. It was the code of the knight-warrior from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries, and its spirit is the soul of Japan to-day. The basis of the system is loyalty and patriotism, its disciplinary inspiration is Zen Buddhism, and its structure is Confucian. The chief virtues of the Bushido are valour and fortitude in the service of one's superior, sincerity to a cause, magnanimity to an enemy, and the Stoic elements of self-control, self-restraint and self-composure. *Seppuku*, or *harakiri*, as a last act, is a supreme mark of honour. But it was a warrior's code, and had the warrior's defects—deceit practised on enemies, want of sympathy, little respect for women, individuality sunk in loyalty to a cause, and that often an unworthy one.

The discipline of Zen or 'meditative' Buddhism gave it a certain strength, but being the most

agnostic of Buddhist sects it only increased the humanitarian character of Shinto.

(ii) *Confucianism—filial piety and fellow-feeling*

As in Japan, so in China, there is an emphasis on the natural capacity of man to attain his highest end. The Book of Records asserts that 'the great God has conferred even on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right' (IV, 3). God has given to man an innate moral sense, and its very possession makes any further divine help somewhat superfluous. 'What Heaven has conferred is called nature (*hsing*), an accordance with this nature is called the way (*tao*); the regulation of the way is called instruction (*chiao*)' (*Chung Yung*). The last word, *chiao*, indicates the differentia of religion as 'e-ducation' of the natural goodness of man, rather than the need of grace in worship.

Man's nature is 'good.' 'In nature (*hsing*) approximate, by practice remote' (*Analects*). At birth men are morally alike, as they grow up they differ widely; they are born good, but in practice they drift away from their original nature. Mencius, the chief disciple of Confucius, made the doctrine of the innate goodness of man the corner stone of Confucian belief. 'Form and beauty constitute our heaven-imparted nature.' 'The tendency of man's nature to good is like that of water to flow downwards.' Mencius shows that the four chief virtues are based on four instincts. Benevolence (*jên*) is based on pity, righteousness (*i*) on shame, propriety (*li*) on reverence, and wisdom (*chih*) on discrimination. Hence these four moral excellen-

cies are 'not moulded into us from without. They are inherent in us.' To show pity for a sufferer is as instinctive as to show fear in danger, and so on.

Confucianism maintains that the essential inborn element in man is the innate tendency of *jên*, a term compounded of the ideograms 'man' and 'two.' It is awakened to full activity by contact with our fellow-beings, producing an abiding link of affection. This fundamental feeling is sympathy for one's kind, kindness or fellowship. Man is by nature altruistic. *Jên* finds expression primarily in the five relationships (1) father—son, (2) ruler—people, (3) husband—wife, (4) brother—sister, (5) friend—friend. On the five relationships as the expression of an innate tendency, Confucius builds up his ethical system. With these he begins rather than with God as the giver of grace. *Jên* is indeed God-given, but, once bestowed, it naturally produces moral activity. Confucius would never discuss the divine nature, much less could he have said God is *Jên* (1 John iv, 8).

The father—son relationship is the key to the rest. Filial piety is the seed of all virtue and parental example is the supreme power that awakens it. The civil virtues grow out of the domestic. Confucianism places its reliance on the power of example. If only the superior (father, emperor, etc.) were to give the right example, the inferior (son, subject, etc.) would develop righteousness. Hence Confucius inculcated the doctrine of the Perfect or Ideal man (*shêng jên*), whose example others would be bound to follow, and of the 'superior man' who, though not morally perfect, is yet by his example a great moral force in the world.

The belief in natural goodness does not mean blindness to actual moral failure, but implies that if men would only follow their nature, they would act rightly. The will of man is free and if he follows his *hsing* all will be well. 'The commander of a great state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him' (*Analects* IX, 25). Mencius held that a man must not blame his nature, but himself, if he goes wrong. But why do men go astray? Confucius' only answer seems to be, the deteriorating influence of bad example and environment.

The virtuous man maintains a balance between two extremes. 'Shih,' said Confucius 'went too far, Shang not far enough . . . Too far, is no nearer than not far enough' (*Analects* XI, 15). Akin to this is the teaching of the *Chung Yung*, 'Now I know why the way wants light. Men of worth go beyond it, and the unworthy do not reach it' (§ 4). *Chung Yung* seems to mean a central (*chung*) attitude of mind so balanced in its outlook, that it influences aright 'common' (*Yung*) or 'daily practice' (Lyll), 'the universal order' (Ku Hung Ming).

The five moral excellencies of Confucianism are *jên*, *i*, *li*, *chih* (already mentioned) and *hsin* (sincerity). *Jên* finds its primary expression in the silver rule, 'Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done to thee' (*Analects* XV, 23), and in the positive idea of 'reciprocity'—sympathy in response to sympathy. Righteousness or justice (*i*) is the expression of *jên* in public life, the sense of duty in all the relationships. Propriety (*li*) means acting in the correct way, on every occasion, from the simplest etiquette to the highest religious duties. 'Etiquette



was the art of those good manners which safeguard good morals'.<sup>1</sup> But the inner motive of sympathy must be present in every act, 'a man without *jên*, what is ceremony to him?' (*Analects* III, 3). Wisdom (*chih*) means knowledge of truth and enthusiasm for it (*Analects* XVII, 8). Sincerity (*hsin*) is reverence for the moral law; standing faithfully by the noblest cause.

There were other theories of the ethical life, such as the hedonistic egoism of Yang-tze, the universal love of Mo-tze, and the doctrine of the radical evil of human nature taught by Hsün-tze. But the teaching of Confucius gained the day as a stable political force strengthening the hierarchy of human relationships, with the Emperor as Supreme.

In the writings of Chu Hsi the idea of God receded yet further into the background, behind the dualism of *li-ch'i*, but as we have seen *li*, though impersonal, is the source of the virtues (*jên*, *hsin*, *i* and *chih*). The influence of Chu Hsi increased the homocentric character of Confucianism.

In any event, however, man was not regarded as a mere human organism. He possessed a God-given moral nature (*hsing*), and, from the psychological standpoint, he had a higher intellectual soul (*shên*), in addition to his sensual nature (*kuei*). In popular thought the better self was *hwun* (to-day *ling-hwun*), and the lower nature *p'oh*.

The universal practice of ancestor-worship testifies to the belief in some kind of survival. Fear of the unattended ghost may have been one of the primitive incentives to ancestor worship, but, in classical times, affection for the departed was uppermost, strength-

<sup>1</sup> McNabb, *Listener*, August 1936.

ened by the belief that the dead could help the living. For Confucius there was the added conviction that respect for the departed encouraged filial piety—the keystone of the ethical system.

The hope of immortality, in spite of ancestor-worship, formed no part of Confucianism. Ancestor-worship turned men's thoughts to the past, but had no message of comfort for the future. Confucius indeed 'worshipped the spirits, as if they were present' (*Analects* III, 12), but he had nothing to say as to their future destiny. 'Before we know what life is how can we know what death is' (*Analects* XI, 11).

Confucianism to-day is but a remnant of the past. Without the official State worship it is practically an ethical system, humanitarian in character, inculcating filial piety and fellow-feeling as the source of all religion.

### (b) DE-HUMANISTIC RELIGION

#### (i) *Taoism—non-action and humility*

The ideal in Taoism is de-humanistic, in that it deprecates will, and advocates passive submission to Tao. Man should act without strife or effort and allow the spontaneous Tao to fulfil the law of his being. 'It is the way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it skilfully overcomes' (*Tao-teh-Ching* LXXII, 2). Taoism inculcates non-action or more strictly *wei wu wei* 'act non-action.' Man is not to strive after an ideal, in the Confucian manner, by means of ethical principles, but is bidden to act spontaneously. Ideals, consciously pursued, produce an artificial ethic, the free flow of Tao in the heart produces

inner achievement. Self-determination defeats its own end, while intuitive ability achieves unconsciously, without the idea of an end. In the spirit of Rousseau, Lao-tze advocated a return to man's natural state, as a release from the fetters of civilization. Man in his primitive state needed no rulers; he lived and loved without being aware either of virtue or merit. But 'when the great Tao ceased to be observed, then charity and righteousness came into vogue' (*Tao-teh-Ching* XVIII, 1).

Taoism is a system of surrender, and its trio of ideals are in accord with this spirit—gentleness, frugality and humility, and the greatest of these is humility. The sage is free from self-display, self-assertion, self-boasting and self-complacency (XXII, 2). 'I have three things which I prize and hold fast. The first is gentleness, the second is frugality, the third is humility' (LXVII, 2). The evils Taoism condemns are querulousness, ostentation and pride. In politics the advice is to avoid politics. Lao-tze upholds non-resistance, and condemns over-legislation and war. The practical ethic of Confucius had bidden the return of good for good and justice for evil, Lao-tze's idealism maintains the return of good for evil as well as for good (XLIX, 2). 'Requite injury with kindness.' But *jên* for the Taoist is not active purposeful love, it is practically 'leave well alone'—non-resistance. Such an attitude, it is held, will allay vindictiveness in others.

Lao-tze is even more intuitionist than Confucius. If, in the view of the latter, the inborn tendency to *jên* needed cultivation, in the view of Lao-tze it only needed leaving alone to develop without hindrance.

Suzuki describes the system as 'negativistic egoism.' It is not indeed grossly anthropocentric, for it seeks the grace of Tao, but there is a tendency to seek Tao, in order to gain individual welfare, rather than to move forward the welfare of humanity. 'The holy man puts himself behind and he comes to the front.' 'He is free from self-display, and therefore he shines; from self-assertion and therefore he is distinguished' (XXII, 2). The worst feature of the system is an anarchic unconventionalism, the best, its plea for a less artificial moralization in the spirit of the saying 'let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.' A similar unconventionalism appears in Chuang-tze, 'In the days when natural instincts prevailed men were in a state of natural integrity, the perfection of human existence. But when sages appeared tripping up people over charity and fettering them with duty to their neighbour, doubt found its way into the world. And then with their gushing over music and fussing over ceremony (*sc.* Confucianism) the Empire became divided against itself.'

Taoism maintains that the adept is immortal for he has mystic union with the immortal principle underlying everything. 'Possessed of Tao he endures for ever. Though his body perishes he suffers no harm.' Chuang-tze also held that the Taoist was immortal, but his account of the relativity of knowledge gave the belief a hazy character. 'How do I know that the love of life is not a delusion? and that the dislike of death is not like a child that is lost and does not know the way home?' In neither the *Tao-teh-Ching* nor the writings of Chuang-tze is it clear that immortality is personal.

The negative character of the Taoist ideal omits elements essential to the full functioning of life. The normal life of personal consciousness involves not only feeling, but also thought and will. Thought takes up ideas into the imagination and forms them into ends to be achieved, and if we eliminate from life the striving after ends we deny the possibility and value of human progress. The conscious life does, of course, include the intuitive element, but it functions only when intuition vitalizes intellectual and volitional effort. The strife involved in the intellectual understanding and choice of ends is the right of human freedom, the passive acceptance of intuitive spontaneity is to deny freedom and to become an automaton. Lao-tze's philosophy of life, therefore, means the de-humanization of man, the denial of elements essential to his nature.

The outcome of Taoism as a working religion is a poor commentary on the genius of Lao-tze and Chuang-tze. Those who stressed inactivity sought peace in solitary retirement. Those who stressed the eternal character of the life in Tao sought, by magical means, to attain long life on earth and immortality hereafter. Buddhism brought to the religion, on the practical side, the belief in rewards and punishments hereafter. *The Book of Actions and their Retributions*, is the title of a popular book, the notice of which first appears in the Sung dynasty. It shows the influence of Confucian ethics as well as Buddhist ideas. Spiritual beings, it is held, curtail men's lives according to their deserts. On the other hand, 300 good deeds will give immortality on earth, and 1,300 immortality in Heaven! Taoism has since developed theories of purgatory,

with terrifying punishments and a belief in an everlasting hell. The Taoism of the *Tao-teh-Ching* and of popular religion are two entirely different things; while the magic of feng-shui, already referred to in the consideration of Confucian cosmology, is its low water mark.

(ii) *Hinduism—denial of individuality*

In dealing with India we must remind ourselves that belief is fluid. From very early times (c. 400 B.C.) six orthodox systems arose, each of which was different in interpretation, and this number is only the minimum of many divergent beliefs all claiming orthodoxy. These systems are (1) *Karma Mīmāṃsa*; the way of works—the sacrificial ritual (2) *Uttara Mīmāṃsa*; the way of knowledge—the *Upanishads* as interpreted by Sancara; (3) *Sāṃkhya*; dualism; (4) *Yoga*; ascetic discipline; (5) *Vaiseshika*; (6) *Nyaya*—atomic systems. All these are orthodox as possessing in common, (i) recognition of the revelation of the Vedas, (ii) belief in transmigration and *karma*, (iii) acknowledgment of the caste system.

An understanding of transmigration, *karma* and caste are essential, therefore, to the study of Hinduism. *Samsāra* (wandering) is the belief that the soul transmigrates from birth to birth. The belief in transmigration is bound up with that in *karma*. This word is derived from a root (*kri*. Cf. Latin *creo*) 'to make,' 'to create,' and is often translated 'action' or 'deed.' It refers either to a religious rite or to any act, and signifies the *effect* of a man's acts on a future rebirth. Rebirth in another life is conditioned by the *karma* or 'deeds' of a former life. 'Verily one becomes good by good action, bad by

bad action' (*Bṛihad Up.* III, 2, 13). The belief in *samsāra* and *karma* does not occur in the *Rig-Veda*, and is the fruit of the contact of Aryan and Dravidian culture. According to the *Upanishads*, those who attain the highest knowledge of Reality reach the 'way of the gods' or union with Brāhman, from which there is no return to earth; those who do good works enter the 'way of the fathers' (heaven), whence they eventually come to earth again; and those who know neither of these ways become 'worms, birds, and creeping things.' Another view is that 'those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain some good birth, the birth of a Brāhman, or a Kshatriya, or a Vaisya. But those whose conduct has been evil will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a dog, or a hog, or a Chandala' (*Chānd V*, 10, 7). In any event, all conduct, whether good or bad, creates *karma* with its resultant rebirth, and the intuitive knowledge of the highest truth alone procures relief from transmigration, so that conduct is not primary. A pessimistic view of life has engendered a longing for release from life or rebirth.

Modern Hindus claim that *karma* is essentially an ethical doctrine, for the deeds of one life have their just reward in another. But retribution seems to have lost its meaning, if there is no memory of the deeds committed in a former life. The ethical value of punishment depends in knowing what one is punished for. The doctrine of *karma* also judges a person by the resultant deed rather than by the character of the doer; by the external act rather than by the inner motive. *Karma* is the 'deed' out of relation to the doer, as a person with motives and

ideals. In any event the supreme ideal is not ethical, but union with Reality.

Caste (Latin *castus*, pure) means the rigid separation of one community or class from another in order to retain purity of stock and custom. A superior conquering race, instead of annihilating an inferior one, allows it to exist on condition that, by isolation, no deteriorating influence is allowed to come from it. The Hindu calls caste *varna* ('colour' bar) or *jāti* ('birth' as deciding social rank). Caste in India has a divine basis, the four groups of Brāhmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaisyas (settlers), and Sudras (slaves) having arisen from the sacrifice of Purusha (*Rig-Veda* X, 19), at the original emanation of the universe. The Laws of Manu not only emphasized the divine origin of caste, but also laid down strict rules, forbidding intermarriage, common meals, *et cetera*, and maintaining the untouchability of outcastes. Caste to-day is a most complicated system determined (*inter alia*) by occupation (e.g., carpenters), race (e.g., Jats), or sect (e.g., Lingayats). It is the chief incentive to morality in India, for loyalty to caste and fear of ostracism is a powerful moral sanction. But caste honour does not make for unity of ideal everywhere, and puts caste-ritual on a level with the highest moral ideals, often defending an immoral person who upholds the traditions, but 'outcasting' another, whose moral character is beyond reproach, but who unwittingly breaks caste.

What have the orthodox systems further to say on man and the good life? The Karma Mīmāṃsa, which has largely fallen into disuse, comes first. It is a defence of the ancient sacrificial system,



teaching that sacrifice generates a potency (*apurva*) which is reaped by the sacrificer in this and future lives of the soul. The soul (*ātman*) is real and eternal, transmigrating from body to body, while *karma* or sacrificial deeds automatically regulate rewards and punishments. The system has, however, been modified, in the course of time, by the belief that regulated conduct and self-restraint gains freedom from transmigration.

In the Sāmkhya dualism the aim of human conduct is to gain for the soul (*purusha*) freedom from the body. *Purusha*, by coming into contact with *prakriti*, has caused the latter to evolve the idea of an individual embodied ego, and it is by destruction of this idea of an ego that the imprisoned *purusha* gains release. When in the body *purusha* remains uncontaminated by its presence, but transmigrates as a prisoner with an illusionary self. On final release from its prison, it continues in a pure isolated condition, apparently without consciousness.

The Yoga philosophy is a method of mental concentration normally regarded as a branch of the Sāmkhya, for attaining freedom of spirit from matter, but, in the service of the Vedānta, may be employed for attaining unity with Brāhman. It involves restraint from unworthy acts such as incontinence or destruction of life (*ahimsa*), regulation of the breath, suppression of sense experience and intense meditation leading to *samādhi*, or a kind of trance. This is a common Hindu method for attaining freedom from transmigration.

The two atomic systems of Vaiseshika and Nyaya are of less importance. The soul is, in their teaching, atomic in character, and is subject to

transmigration, the *vera causa* of release being the understanding of the systems.

The ruling system is the Uttara Mīmāṃsa, to which the Karma Mīmāṃsa, the Sāmkhya and Yoga have, in different ways, accommodated themselves, without entirely denying their original premises.

The system of Sancara represents the climax of the teaching of the Uttara Mīmāṃsa. The doctrine of man in this system maintains the belief that all but the real self (*ātman*) is illusion. This real self is nothing less than Brāhman the unconditioned Reality or Absolute Spirit, not merely Supreme Being *in* man, but the Supreme Being *as* man, *tat tvam asi*, 'thou art That,' *aham brāhma asmi* 'I am Brāhman.' But Brāhman is God impersonal, indeterminate and unqualified (*nirguna*) the universal subject of all thought, without consciousness of objects, the One Reality transcending the subject-object relation, though immanent in man as his innermost self in distinction from his empirical knowledge. This empirical knowledge of an individual personal self living a life of its own is illusion, hiding the true nature of *ātman* as Brāhman, and is due to limiting conditions (*upādhis*) imposed upon the *ātman* by the senses (*indriya*) the mind (*manas*) and other factors of the psychological life. The *ātman* is, in its real essence, untouched by these lower factors, but from the empirical point of view, the *ātman* is limited by them. Instead of appearing in its true light as the impassible Brāhman, it appears as actor, and enjoyer, and transmigrates from life to life, a new birth being determined by the *karma* of a former existence. Release of the *ātman* is achieved by the intuitive knowledge

of its identity with Brāhman, not primarily by moral endeavour, for all deeds, whether good or bad, involve a rebirth.

The moral life may, however, prepare the way by allaying desire and selfishness. Ethical teaching is by no means absent from Indian thought, but its significance is not ultimate. The supreme ideal is a cognitive intuition. From the earliest times hospitality and liberality were at a premium; sobriety, integrity, purity and truthfulness were enjoined, while the supreme virtue is *ahimsa* the non-destruction of life, signifying at its best sympathy for all life, whether human or animal. There is, however, no clear doctrine of 'sin'; *pāpa* means a vicious deed, something to be avoided. But there is lacking a keen sense of personal guilt. Evil is too often associated with *klēsa* the affliction arising from enchainment to *samsāra* 'tenacity of mundane existence,' the original sin par excellence.

The identification of the self with the Supreme is, in one sense, an ennobling of man, but the refusal to recognize the distinction of the self from the Supreme involves a de-humanization of man. Man has not been granted a life of his own to develop in a positive way, but an illusory life which it is his duty to dispel. And when dispelled immortality is as a dreamless sleep, the passionless existence of Brāhman. The good life which is most extolled in India is the ascetic one represented by the Yoga exercises, by which the senses are diverted from the external world to the mental life within, and a species of hypnotic sleep induced. 'Supernatural' powers, mesmeric in character, are attained, and in the highest state of *samādhi* (union with Reality) emanci-

pation is attained of the *ātman* from material *prakṛiti* or its limiting *uphādhis*.

Brahmanism allowed room in its comprehensive system for both moral conduct and mystic trance by legislating, as in the Laws of Manu, for four periods (*āśramas*) in the life of the twice-born; as (1) student, (2) householder, (3) hermit and (4) homeless ascetic. In the last two stages, towards the end of life, the twice-born can practise meditation to his heart's content, as a means to salvation.

The sectarian worship of personal deities taught the doctrine of *bhakti* (loving faith) as a means to emancipation. This allowed more room for the common duties of daily life. The *Bhagavad Gita*, an early and important treatise on *bhakti*, taught that the performance of conduct in a spirit of passionless detachment, could lead to release, if the worshipper exhibited loving faith on the personal God, Krishna. The worship of God, as personal, also led to a deeper sense of personal values, so that, in principle, religion was open to all castes.

This deeper sense of personality found support, as we have already seen, in the religious philosophy of Ramanuja, which held that the *ātman* or self was eternally distinct from God—Brāhman conceived as Himself personal. Such a view of the soul allowed a real ground, in deity, for conduct and the ethical life, for the soul is not identified with God, but is a mode of deity with a conscious life of its own. Yet the relationship of the soul to God is a very close one, adjectival, not substantival in character, and even sectarian worship easily lapsed into monism, with the correlative longing for absorption into deity. Saivism went this way more easily

indeed than Vaishnavism, but only too often the duties of life hung lightly on the shoulders of Vaishnava saints, who sought in ecstatic devotion peace from the world. Sancara's 'denial of individuality' or 'de-humanization' had an influence which it was difficult to evade.

(iii) *Buddhism—denial of the craving for life*

Buddhism of the primitive Pali tradition presents us with the strange doctrine of the negation of life. Buddha's so-called first Sermon ('The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness') records the 'Four Noble Truths' concerning:—

(1) The fact of suffering (*dukkha*)—the pain to which all men are liable, because they are individuals.

(2) The cause of suffering—the insistent craving (*tanhā*) for life.

(3) The destruction of suffering—the result of the laying aside of this craving.

(4) The method—the eightfold path of

(i) right understanding—insight into the essential painfulness of existence, its transience and impermanence and the ultimate unreality of the self (*atta* = *ātman*).

(ii) right intent—the mind, as will, set on allaying craving.

(iii) right speech—a similar discipline of conversation.

(iv) right conduct—the maintenance of a high moral standard as a means of allaying craving.

(v) right livelihood—the ordering of business so as to avoid the destruction of life, or immoral practices.

- (vi) right mastery of mind—the control of all the faculties.
- (vii) right mindfulness (*satī*)—lucidity and alertness of consciousness, which is always on the guard against a lapse.
- (viii) right meditation (*samādhi*)—intense application of mind whence comes *nirvana*—the extinction of all craving.

According to this teaching life is essentially painful because its conative basis is for ever creating a thirst or craving that can never be satisfied. The craving for pleasure, or success, or fame, or any other end is an expression of this passion for life, and the only way to destroy the pain is to destroy the passion itself, i.e., the will to live. Buddhism, according to the early documents, is thus the 'denial of the craving for life.'

Man is a composite of elements destined eventually to dissolve. These elements are called *khandhas* (aggregates). (1) *rūpa*, bodily appearance, (2) *vedanā*, feeling, (3) *sannā*, perception, (4) *sankhāra*, mental and emotional construction, and (5) *viññāna*, consciousness. Man's composite nature is the *raison d'être* of his craving, for pure unity or 'simplicity' could not crave. This craving produces *karma* (kamma), and when death ensues, for 'impermanent are composite things,' the five *khandhas* will be dispersed, and the *karma* will bring about a re-birth of the individual with another five *khandhas*. There is no *atta*, or soul, transmigrating from life to life, nor is there a static *Atman* or world-soul with which man is identical, there is just transmission of *karma* producing an endless chain whose links are variously given in different treatises, e.g., ignorance—craving

attachment—existence—birth—old age—death—ignorance—craving, and so on, again and again, until a man attains salvation or release.

That the human being is no more than an aggregate of psychological constituents without a self is illustrated by the parable of the chariot ('Questions of King Milinda').<sup>1</sup> The question is asked, 'What is a chariot?' And all the parts are referred to one by one. The axle is not the chariot, nor are the wheels, the body, the yoke, nor the reins. 'Then,' replies the philosopher, 'I see no chariot, it is only a sound, a name.' Likewise none of the *khandhas* is the self, and as the word 'chariot' is a convenient name for the assembled parts so 'self' is a convenient name for the *khandhas*, not a distinct individual entity. The same illustration is given in the *Way of Purity* of Buddhagosa (fourth century A.D.), and the 'nominalism' implied in it appears as early as the second century A.D. in Nāgārjuna. There is no such thing as a self-existing entity, only 'names' applied to complexes of attributes.

The doctrine of man, in the documents, is thus a purely negative one, and represents de-humanization in the worst form.

The thirst (*tanhā*) for life, is to be quenched, desire of sense (*kāma*) is to be driven away, even *chanda*—wish or predilection—is sin-soiled, though there may be a higher *chanda*, the hope which brings about the release of *nirvana*.

There is no doctrine of 'sin' because there is no belief in a personal God. Moral evil is like a 'leak' in a cistern, an *āsava* or 'escape' of passion. The *āsavas* are sensuality, individuality, delusion, and

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E., Vol. XXXV, pp. 40 seq.

ignorance, the defilements escaping from a defiled mind. When the *āsava*s are subjugated the *arhat* or saint 'has destroyed craving thirst, by thorough penetration of mind he has rolled away every fetter, and he has made an end of pain.'<sup>1</sup> Primitive Buddhism, as we know it from the surviving documents, was primarily the religion of the monastery, though it needed the lay-member for support. The code of the lay adherent included vows against the taking of life, theft, unchastity, untruth and taking strong drink; to these vows the mendicant-monk added rules against indulgence in food, garlands, sleep, dancing and use of money.

The ideal is *nirvana* (Pali *nibbana*) from the root *va*, to blow, the final state of peace or calm when all passion, suffering and individuality is 'blown out' like an extinguished flame. The *arhat*, or saint, may attain *nirvana* in this life, but complete extinction or *pari-nirvana* comes after death. The documents are not clear as to the character of *nirvana*. Vallée Poussin refers to the three possible meanings, (1) annihilation, (2) immortality and (3) unqualified deliverance from suffering. He thinks that the most exact interpretation is 'unqualified deliverance,' the joyful hope of release from passion and suffering, the notion of *nirvana*-annihilation being chiefly a result of philosophical inquiry and therefore a notion of secondary rank.<sup>2</sup>

According to the *Sabbāsava Sutta* it is wrong not only to assert 'I have a self' but also to assert 'I have not a self.' It seems that the absolute denial of a self was a later development. According to the

<sup>1</sup> *Sabbāsava Sutta*, S.B.E., Vol. XI, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> *The Way to Nirvana*, pp. 115 and 124.



*Sabbāsava Sutta* the 'mortal' sin is self-assertion, viz., the assertion that 'by my self I am conscious of being a not-self.'<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Rhys Davids has, indeed, vigorously maintained that the denial of life is untrue to the original teaching of Gautama. The pessimistic view of existence as ill is, in her opinion, due to the unsound influence of the monastery, which killed the healthy-minded view of progress to higher stages of existence. What Gautama denied was the Brāhmanic belief in a static divine Self untouched by evil; affirming, on the contrary, the reality of a dynamic immanent life as a 'becoming' (*bhava*) with infinite potency. 'Thou art That' of the Upanishads became 'Thou art becoming.' Mrs. Rhys Davids maintains that Gautama denied that any one of the *khandhas* was the self, in order to emphasize the reality of the 'whole man' as wayfarer to higher states of existence as against the false abstraction 'self.' The *khandhas* were only mental abstractions, the wayfarer is the man as a whole. But Buddhism became a study of mental abstractions, and thus came to deny the 'man' or true self, and to lose the belief in man as a positive wayfarer on an eternal pilgrimage. Thereupon the noble word 'becoming' lost its meaning of progress and degenerated into the tainted word 'becoming' as rebirth, to be avoided at all cost. With this degeneration even the once favourable word *chanda* or wish (desire) became a word of ill-fame, and Gautama's new Gospel of will-exertion was forgotten in the de-humanizing ideal of *nirvana* as the destruction of all becoming. As the documents have come down to us the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 299.

negative de-humanizing system has gained the day.

Mahāyāna Buddhism has, however, upheld a more positive outlook. Instead of aiming primarily at the negative peace of *nirvana* the Bodhisattva seeks first to save mankind, and in the Pure Land Sects not only is homage paid to a personal Buddha, but a positive Paradise is sought.

It is true that the nominalism of the Mādhyamika philosophy confirmed the *non-atta* doctrine, but a more solid foundation for human nature was found in the affirmation of an Absolute as the permanent Reality or ground of all phenomenal being. This Absolute or Buddha-Nature is, in the view of the Tendai sect, potentially present to every man, even the most vicious, and is fully present in the enlightened. The task of man is to realize the truth of this all-pervading Buddha-nature and to awaken it into full life. This end is achieved by living the life of the universal-self, viz., saving oneself by saving others.

The allaying of the craving for individuality is still, however, involved. The ideal is to recognize that the finite self is not real, except as sharing in the all-embracing unity of the Absolute. Yet, though the self is unreal apart from the Absolute, the Absolute is also unreal apart from the finite selves. This affirmation is true for both Keron and Tendai sects, the difference between them being, that the Keron stresses the multiplicity of selves each revealing the Whole as the flower in the crannied wall, while the Tendai stresses the unity of the Absolute, embracing a collection of minds. Both sects, however, deny the reality of a self, as the perceiver of a

world external to itself. Ultimately self and Absolute are one.

The Absolute is beyond morality. The ethical life exists only for the life of multiplicity. But in some sense, wisdom (*prajna*) and love (*karuna*) have a place in the absolute life. The ultimate nature of evil is 'separateness,' attempting to live apart from the Whole, producing selfishness and passion. When the self is taken up into the life of the Whole 'separateness' and evil, in its various forms, disappear.

All men are potentially possessors of the absolute life. Likewise all men are potential Buddhas, or Bodhisattvas, able to transfer their enlightenment to others. According to the Pure Land Sect (Jodo), Amida Buddha had acquired so much merit that he could transfer it to anyone who called on his name in faith. Hence there arose the doctrine of salvation by faith, in order to attain salvation. The True Pure Land Sect (Shinshu) stressed the doctrine of faith even more than the Jodo. Men could, therefore, live a secular life and attain illumination by receiving the fruit of another's remuneration. Buddhism was no longer the religion of the monastery, as with the Kegon and Tendai, but the religion of daily life. Shinran (thirteenth century), the founder of the True Pure Land Sect, set aside the monastic robe for family life, as a practical testimony to the secular life being no obstacle to salvation. The gate was, however, open for antinomianism, for the belief that no sin was too great to prevent salvation by faith in Amida led to the belief that to have a scruple about one's moral depravities was to rely on one's own power rather than to trust on Amida.

It is important to observe that even the most secular Buddhism still relied on the virtue of Amida Buddha or the illumination of the Bodhisattvas attained by other-worldly ideals. The secular Buddhist might turn his back on the monastery, but he could not turn his back on the merit of the Buddha. It was this merit that gave him salvation. He did not attain salvation *by virtue of* his secular life but *in spite of* his secular life. Thus Buddhism did not become at heart, a 'this-worldly' religion, and was, therefore, still fundamentally de-humanizing.

Besides, even if the Pure Land Sect held that the personal Buddha revealed the nature of the Absolute as in some sense personal, there is always present the conviction that the personal self does not exist as a substantial entity with a life of its own, but only as an appearance of the absolute life. Mahāyāna Buddhism, even in its more humanizing forms, does not escape entirely from pantheistic absolutism.

The Zen sect represents the farthest extreme of pantheistic belief and aims at attaining, by meditation, the realization of the absolute life immanent in all phenomena. The pantheism is so complete that the phenomenal world is treated as the life of the absolute. *Samsāra* is *nirvana*. The system inculcated a strict discipline which, we have seen, moulded the ethical code of the Bushido. The ideal was to attain, by sudden illumination (*satori*), mystic insight into the unity of all things.

Man, according to the Mahāyāna philosophy, is immortal. Not, however, in virtue of his individuality, but as an expression of the immortal absolute life. And the Pure Land Sects which lay greater stress on the reality of personal existence still

virtually rely on the philosophical belief, that self has no distinct substantial existence apart from the Absolute. The personal self is not a subject possessing attributes, but an attribute of the Absolute life.

### (c) THEOCENTRIC RELIGION

#### (i) *Zoroastrianism—freedom of choice*

The last three religions failed to recognize adequately the natural man. Taoism depreciated his volition, Hinduism his individuality, Buddhism the passion for life itself. The ideal in each case was the attainment of an end which involved the stripping off of human elements. The religions we are now to consider accept the healthy-minded view that man, as created is good, though he has fallen short of the divine ideal. There is the recognition in each case that God can enable man to achieve the good life by the consecration of his natural gifts.

Man in Zoroastrianism is a creature of the Good Deity, Ahura Mazdah, and he has the ability to choose righteousness and truth, the characteristics of the wise Creator. But an evil deity has marred the good creation. The primal man Gayomard (Gaya Maretan) is slain by Ahriman. Nevertheless, from his seed, miraculously preserved, the human pair Mashya and Mashyoi were begotten. They were created 'perfect in devotion' but fell, in spite of the divine warning not to worship demons, their minds becoming 'thoroughly corrupted by them.' A knowledge of the divine precepts is here presupposed from the beginning.

The *Vendīdād* also mentions a primal man Yima, 'the first mortal', , , with whom Ī, Ahura Mazdah,

did converse, whom I taught the religion of Ahura, the religion of Zarathushtra.<sup>1</sup>

According to the *Gāthas* sin entered into the world at the instigation of the *daēvas* who defrauded men of 'happy life and immortality' (*Yasna* XXXII, 5), through bad thought and bad word. The *Gāthas* use a fragment of Iranian folk-story as an explanation of the first sin. Yima, deceived by the *daēvas*, gave forbidden food (meat from the sacred ox) to mankind in order to render him immortal. To grasp immortality before God's good time was thus an act of presumption. Firdausi gives Yima's sin as pretending to be a god. The later Avesta states that Yima's sin was finding delight in words of falsehood, whereupon he lost the kingly glory (*hvarenō*). The *daēvas* fell yet earlier than man by 'choosing not aright' (*Yasna* XXX, 6) 'for infatuation came upon them as they took counsel together.'<sup>2</sup> Zoroastrianism, therefore, has a doctrine of the Fall, perhaps not unrelated to the Biblical narrative. Man was created good by the good deity but failed to attain goodness through the influence of evil deities.

He did not, however, lose his freedom of choice, and is responsible for his future destiny. Each man has a *daēna*, or self, by which he chooses to side either with the wise Lord or with the evil *daēvas*. *Daēna* is normally good, the spiritual power in man enabling him to choose aright, but it is capable of wrong choice. It is variously translated 'conscience' (Geiger), 'religious conscience' (Dhalla), 'self' (Moulton). In later Pahlavi, as *dīno*, it means

<sup>1</sup> S.B.E., Vol. IV, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Moulton *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 307.

'religion,' the potentiality of the self for worship and the good life.

In spite of its spiritual nature, the *daēna* can choose falsehood, for man has the gift of freewill and is a fallen creature.

Zoroastrianism also mentions *fravashi* as the nobler part of a man untainted by evil. The *fravashi* is not mentioned in the *Gāthas*, and it has been conjectured that Zarathushtra repudiated the word as a hindrance to self-effort. Men might be led to rely on the supernatural goodness of the *fravashi* rather than exhibit the self-reliance of free and unfettered choice of the *daēna*. Yet grace is not entirely denied, for the *daēna* as the gift of the good deity is potentially good.

The idea of the *fravashi* was an important element in Zoroastrianism, in spite of the silence of the *Gāthas*. The *fravashis* were probably, in origin, ancestor spirits. 'The souls of the dead which are the *fravashis* of the righteous' (*Yasna* XVI, 7). The *fravashi* came to be regarded as a kind of guardian angel existing before birth and surviving the body. In Magian Zoroastrianism Ahriman was kept at bay by the adoration of the *fravashis* of the righteous, thus preventing the evil forces from gaining power over the good creation. The danger of reliance upon the *fravashi*, foreseen by Zarathushtra, threatened the religion in unexpected ways.

The nature of man is summed up in *Yasht* XIII, 155, which mentions the 'vitality, the self, the perception, the soul, and the *fravashi* of righteous men and women.' Here we have a five-fold conception of the psychological nature of man typical

of Zoroastrianism. These elements are not systematically distinguished, but, in a general sense, the different meanings can be marked. The *ahu* is the 'life,' or 'vitality,' *baodha* is the 'intelligence,' or 'perception' guiding action (cf. Sanscrit *bodh*), the *urvan* is the soul, possessed by both men and animals, the unity of the life principle. It survives the body and may, according to its development in good works, either be cast into hell or be joined with the *fravashi* in heaven. The *daēna* is the power of choice, potentially good, but capable of misuse. It will survive death and a post-Gāthic hymn represents it as meeting the good man hereafter as a fair maiden: 'I am thine own good thoughts, words and deeds, thy daēna' (*Yasht* XXII, 11), but encountering the evil man as a ugly hag. The *fravashi* is the spiritual part of man untouched by evil.

Throughout the darkest period of Zoroastrianism the teaching of Zarathushtra was never entirely forgotten, viz., that man is an ethical being who needed the help of the spiritual world to prevent evil choice, yet responsible for his actions. As the primæval spirits chose good or ill, so man has the capacity to take sides. There is no fatalism in Zoroastrianism, and the appeal to men to use their gift of free choice, reinforced by the promise of a happy hereafter, has a ring of optimism about it. The disciple is bidden to fight courageously for Truth against the Lie, armed with the conviction that good will ultimately overcome ill. 'When the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the distant triumph-song, and hearts are brave again and arms are strong.'

The good life is summed up in the words 'Truth'



and 'Purity.' For the *Gāthas* it is a life of honour, sincerity, fair dealing, compact-abiding, and industry (tilling the soil for the good of man). For later Zoroastrianism there is, in addition to ethical purity, a ruling belief in the purity of earth, fire and water, preventing, for example, both burial and cremation, lest earth or fire be defiled by the mortal remains. Sin, on the other hand, is summed up in the words 'Falsehood' and 'Impurity,' the converse of the virtues, or defilement of the elements, earth, fire and water.

A man is judged, in the ethical sense, by the preponderance of good thoughts, words and deeds. Every good deed is an arrow wounding Ahriman. In this way there is a tendency for the external deed to be aimed at, rather than the orientation of character as a whole, but insistence on good thoughts as well as words or deeds does allow some room for motive, in addition to external deed.

The eschatology embraces differing ideas, but all agree in the belief that there is a resurrection and a judgment on sin. The conception appears of the *cinvat* bridge wide for the virtuous, but narrow as a razor's edge for the wicked, causing them to fall into the bottomless pit below. The ordeal of molten metal is also referred to, feeling like warm milk to the good, but a destroying fire to the evil. The notion of the weighing of good against evil deeds also appears. The *Gāthas* sum up man's destiny in the words, 'in immortality shall the soul of the righteous be joyful, in perpetuity shall be the torments of the Liars' (*Yasna* XLV, 7). The heaven of the righteous has no sensuality about it, it is 'the Home of Best Thought,' 'The House of

Song.' For the man whose good and evil deeds are equally balanced there is the 'separate place,' neither Hell nor Heaven. Parsi theology mitigates the idea of eternal punishment by a belief in the purgatorial character of Hell, and the hope that all men will be saved ; thus sealing the doom of Ahriman.

Zoroastrianism is, at heart, a theocentric religion. Man is not left to develop his nature on humanitarian lines. His *daēna* urges him to worship. Ahura Mazdah is the exemplar of the good life, and helps man in his conflict with evil. Nor is man de-humanized, he is bidden to use all his gifts, thoughts, words and deeds and not to depreciate them. There is no asceticism in Zoroastrianism. But there is a Pelagian tendency in the emphasis laid upon the use of an unimpaired free-will.

(ii) *Judaism—the evil inclination without impairment of freedom*

The conception of man is interpreted in the light of his relationship to God far more clearly in Hebrew than in Zoroastrian religion. From one point of view he is frail and weak, of 'flesh,' from another he is life or vitality (*nephesh*) derived from a direct in-breathing of God. He is created in the divine image. Any special manifestation of power is due to the influx of the divine spirit (*ruach*). He is generally conceived of as a unity, not a composite of body and soul ; from one angle he is flesh, from another he is vitality. After the exile the *ruach*, or spirit, is regarded as the normal possession of all men, the gift of God's presence. 'Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy *ruach* from me,' pleads the Psalmist (li, 11) who fears

that his sin may cost him the gift of God's spirit.

Man is created good. There is no de-humanization. The basic instincts of power (dominion over the animal world), sex and companionship (it is not good to be alone), are part of the divine intention. But man is aware of his frailty and weakness, and need of divine holiness. His first parents fell from grace by disobedience. But he is still free to choose the right. The doctrine of the covenant maintains that if Israel chooses aright then Yahweh will preserve Israel from danger as the nation's God.

Man must be holy as God is holy. God's will is known through the Law (*Torah*), the study of which is man's delight. Sin is primarily rebellion against Yahweh, a refusal to acknowledge the rightful claim of God as Israel's King and Father. It is also missing the mark (*hātā*'), going astray (*āwōn*), or an act of guilt (*rāshā'*). After the exile the sense of guilt was deepened and the greater need of atoning grace felt.

The narrative of the Fall had little direct influence on the remaining Old Testament teaching, but in the extra-canonical literature the view of man's first high estate develops, and sin is held to be the failure to maintain that primal purity. Man was 'created exactly like the angels' (1 Enoch lxix, 11) 'for incorruption' (Wisdom ii, 23), but sin entered owing to the envy of the devil, causing death to come into the world (Wisdom, ii, 24). 'From a woman came the beginning of sin and by her we all die' (Ecclesiasticus xxv, 24).

The predominant teaching of the *Talmud* is that the Fall of Adam brought on to man the curse of death, without the impairment of freedom. Thus

the spirit of 2 Baruch liv, 19, is maintained, 'every man is the Adam of his own soul.' Nevertheless, he has an inclination (*yētzet*), or bias, towards evil. Rabbinic theology took up the Biblical idea that 'every imagination (*yētzet*) of the thoughts of 'his heart was only evil continually' (Genesis vi, 5).<sup>1</sup> This evil impulse did not arise from the Fall, though the Fall may have given it greater power. God originally created man with this evil inclination (*yētzet ha-ra*), but at the same time He created a good inclination (*yētzet ha-tōb*). Man was thus created as a moral being possessing the potentiality for good or evil. God also knows the future, but his knowledge does not cause the future. 'Everything is foreknown, but man is free' (Aboth iii, 19). The incentive to holiness is the Law, the grace of God, and the promise of rewards hereafter. The 11th Article of Maimonides maintains the belief that 'God rewards those who perform the commandments of his law, and punishes those who transgress them.' But the creed has been criticized in Judaism for not containing an article on human freedom. Maimonides, however, put freedom at the basis of the Torah (*Guide to the Perplexed*, III, 17), and orthodox Judaism regards the gift of freedom as one of the chief blessings of God to man.

The belief of Judaism in future rewards involves the doctrine of an after life. The ancient Hebrew was so absorbed in God's relationship to the nation in this life that he only gradually arrived at the idea of life hereafter in communion with Him, but by the time of the Maccabees there appears a clear belief in retribution hereafter. The Pharisees,

<sup>1</sup> *Bereshith Rabbah* IX.

according to Josephus (*Antiq.* 18, 1, 3) admitted the resurrection only of the good, the evil being 'detained in an everlasting prison.' The orthodox view implied the resurrection of the body. 'The righteous shall arise clad in their garments' (*Kethub*, 111 b). Maimonides, under the influence of Aristotle, hesitates between this view, and a belief in spiritual immortality. In the '*Guide*' (I, 41) he regards the principle of intellectuality as surviving death, in distinction from the principle of animality which cannot exist independently of the body. Maimonides' spiritualization of the orthodox belief has had an influence on later Judaism. But the Jewish Prayer Book still presents to the worshipper the belief in a physical resurrection (Singer, p. 5). The belief in the immortality of the soul is held by modern liberal Jews, and rationalist theologians who strike a mean between strict orthodoxy and liberalism (Weill and Joseph).

Judaism is like Zoroastrianism in its recognition that God is the source of all human good and that man should respond to His goodness by obedience. Both religions take a healthy-minded view of man as created good, as having fallen from grace and as possessing freewill, though in the case of Judaism there is an emphasis on the sinfulness of man through the evil *yētzzer*.

The simple religion of the *Gāthas* is, nevertheless, on a far lower level of development than the religion of the Old Testament, not to mention the crude magic of the later Avesta. The ethical monotheism of the Hebrew prophets is unique in the history of religion before Christ.

The good life involves duties to God and to one's

fellow-men as summed up in the decalogue. The chief sins denounced by the prophets were idolatry, with its accompanying immoral rites of the soil, and the social evils of injustice and oppression of the poor. 'Sin against a man's neighbour is inseparably connected with sin against God. In Amos it is specially clear that social wickedness proceeds from a wrong conception of God, a non-moral notion of a God who was merely the object of cultus.'<sup>1</sup>

(iii) *Islam—virtual denial of human freedom*

The theocentric character of Islam is so pronounced that man tends to become a pawn in the hands of the Sovereign Creator. The *Qur'an* represents man as a frail creature dependent upon the All-Powerful Deity, and his duty is 'submission,' without question, to the divine will.

The psychological terms are equivalents of Biblical terminology. Man possesses a soul (*nafs* = Hebrew *nephesh*, Sura III, 24) and is divinely influenced by the spirit of Allah (*ruh* = Hebrew *ruach* Sura XVI, 2). The angel Gabriel mediated the divine spirit to Muhammed, as the direct revelation of God (*wahi-zahir*). Saints are inspired in a more general way (*ilham*). The heart (*qalb* = Heb. *lēb*) is the inner principle that perceives divine truth (Sura XXVI, 89).

Man's creation is illustrated in Suras XXII and XXIII by the analogy of human birth; first the germ, then blood, flesh and bones, and finally Allah brings forth 'man of yet another make,' i.e., possessing a soul. The whole process is the work of God. Man is fashioned of 'goodliest fabric,'

<sup>1</sup> Tribe, *The Christian Social Tradition*, p. 96.

the healthy-minded view, but Allah has 'brought him down to the lowest of the low' (XCV, 4). His nature is sound; his gifts are to be used in God's service, but 'man hath been created weak' (IV, 32). Hence his liability to sin. The theory of man's fall through the temptation of Satan (Iblis) appears in Suras II, 35 and XX, where the Biblical narrative is referred to, with variant details, from the Jewish Talmud, e.g., the refusal of Iblis to pay reverence to man as his superior (Bereshith Rabbah).

The divine sovereignty is so emphatically insisted upon that there hardly seems to be any room left for human freedom. Man can only will as Allah wills (LXXXI, 29). Yet he is responsible for his actions. God 'breathed into the soul its wickedness and its piety'; but man must keep it unsoiled, 'blessed now is he that hath kept it pure' (XCI, 9). Islam, like Zoroastrianism and Judaism, does not depreciate man's endowments. Asceticism only enters as a discipline. Like them also it recognizes man's weakness and sinfulness with a correlative recognition of the need of God. God has helped man through prophets from the earliest times and finally in Muhammed the 'soul of the prophets.' He helps man also through worship and prayer.

Sin is disobedience, failure to respond to the divine call, rebellion against the authority of God. In practice it is transgression of the legal precepts of the *Qur'an*. There are great sins (*kabira*), such as disregarding the divine unity (*shirk*), murder and adultery. *Shirk* is strictly unpardonable, the sin of sins, other great sins can be forgiven after repentance. Little sins (*saghira*) can find forgiveness more easily if the greater ones are avoided.

The ethical holiness of God is not clearly enunciated. An act is regarded as good, not because it corresponds with the divine nature, but because the omnipotent being has willed it. Whatever Allah forbids is sin, whatever he permits is virtue. Conduct is determined by the distinction *harām*, forbidden, and *halāl*, permitted. In actual practice what is permitted is normally what is approved by the conscience. But not necessarily so. Marital privileges accorded to the prophet beyond the recognized code and the cruelty of 'holy warfare,' are, at least, consistent with a view of the 'good' as based on the arbitrary will of God. The morality of the *Qur'an* was, however, an advance on that of the pre-Islamic nomads. The Yathribites were forbidden to steal, commit adultery or fornication, expose infants, and to slander. Charity, fidelity and a forgiving spirit are enjoined in the *Qur'an*. Also sexual moderation, 'save with the wives or slaves whom one's right hand possesses' (XXIII, 4).

The doctrine of predestination comes to the surface as a correlative of God's sovereign will. 'He causeth whom He will to enter into His mercy' (LXXVI, 30). 'They for whom we have before ordained good things shall be far away from Hell' (XXI, 101). 'Nothing can befall us but what God hath destined for us' (IX, 51). Predestination applies equally to the wicked—'there were others decreed to err' (XVI, 38). Yet men are blamed for refusing to hearken to Muhammed's message. 'Whatsoever betideth thee of evil is from thyself; and we have sent thee to mankind as an apostle' (IV, 81). On the final judgment day God will 'reward every soul as it deserveth' (XIV, 50).



Man is mortal (XXI, 35), but will be awakened on the day of resurrection (XXIII, 12), when just balances will be set up (XXI, 49). Those who have done good works will go to Paradise, the enjoyments of which are painted in sensual colours (XXXVI, 55), and those who have done bad works will enter the fires of Hell, the torments of which are luridly depicted by Muhammed (XVIII, 28). The relief of death is denied (XLIII, 77) and 'in the torment of Hell shall the wicked remain for ever' (XLIII, 74).

The legal aspect of Islam developed, after the death of the prophet, by the growth of schools of jurisprudence which decided meticulously the rules of conduct. Every orthodox Muslim (Sunni) orders his life according to the *fiqh*, or law, of one of the chief schools of Hanifa, Malik, Shafei or Hanbal. The five 'pillars' of conduct are (1) confession of the unity of God and the prophetic mission of Muhammed, (2) prayer, mainly ritual, (3) fasting, (4) almsgiving, (5) pilgrimage to Mecca. Sometimes 'warfare' for Allah is included as a pillar.

The most important problem dealt with in later theology is the relationship of man's will to the will of God. How far is man free? The Qadarites claimed that man had *qadar*, or 'power,' over his actions. Ma'bad al-Juhani paid for this heresy with his life (A.D. 699). The rationalist Mutazilites were the heirs of Qadarite doctrine, denying that God predestined the actions of men. Wasil ibn Ata (*d.* A.D. 748) maintained that man had unimpaired freedom, and so merited rewards and punishments according to his deeds. The freedom of the will was for him an *a priori* certainty. The Mutazilites held that men attained to a knowledge of virtue by

the light of reason, and that the sense of duty, coupled with the gift of freewill, rendered him accountable for his acts. The Jabarites upheld a view directly opposed to that of the Qadarites, viz., that man had no freewill and God was responsible (*jabr*=compulsion) for human actions.

The orthodox view of the Asharites was a victory for the Quranic doctrine of predestination and the all-Sovereign will of God, though an attempt was made to mediate between the Qadarite and Jabarite positions. Whatever God wills is acquired (*kasb*) by man, for man is given the power to convert will into action. But he has this power only by a special creative act of God, at each moment, so that fundamentally the orthodox view is fatalist. 'The eventual victory in Islam of the absolute doctrine of God's eternal decree was the victory of the more fundamental of Muhammed's conflicting conceptions. The other had been much more a campaigning expedient.'<sup>1</sup>

Islamic theology therefore virtually denies human freedom, and is distinguished from Zoroastrianism and Judaism in that it stresses the divine side in the God-man relationship at the expense of the human.

#### (d) THEOCENTRIC RELIGION: GRACE CROWNING NATURE—CHRISTIANITY

The Christian doctrine of man assumes the Old Testament affirmation that he is created in the image of God, and that, as God is ethically holy, so the ideal for man is ethical holiness.

The threefold terminology of the Old Testament, flesh, life and spirit, bears some relationship to the

<sup>1</sup> Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*, p. 128.

New Testament terminology 'flesh' (*sarx*), 'soul' (*psuchē*), and 'spirit,' (*pneuma*). The 'flesh' is only too easily the occasion of sin, the 'soul' is more susceptible to the divine influence, the 'spirit' is the highest element in closest touch with God. The 'spirit' is willing, even though the 'flesh' is weak (Matthew xxvi, 41). The 'soul,' or 'life,' is of more value than the whole world (Mark viii, 36). The fourth Gospel speaks of 'life' (*zōē*) in touch with God as 'eternal,' the realization of Heaven on earth.

Christianity has laid more stress than Judaism on the effects of the Fall. For St. Paul the Fall has left a terrible scar on human nature. By it sin entered into the world, and man has become unable, in his own strength, to do good. 'For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not' (Romans vii, 18). The flesh is not essentially evil, but it has become the instrument of sin. It can, however, be sanctified and become the instrument of grace. Christ appeared 'in the likeness of human flesh' and thus 'condemned sin in the flesh' (Romans viii, 3).

Christianity is distinctive in that it emphasizes (1) a radical tendency to sinfulness, (2) the perfection of the ideal, (3) the need for grace and (4) the sanctification, not the repudiation of man's natural gifts—grace crowns nature.

The radical tendency to sinfulness expresses itself as 'original sin.' This latter term is used by Tertullian to signify an inherited taint of sin. The early Fathers felt, however, that in spite of the evil results of the Fall, man, as created by God, was

fundamentally sound. The Pelagian heresy went to the extreme of asserting that man was entirely unaffected by the Fall, while Augustinianism in reply swung to the opposite extreme of affirming that man was intrinsically corrupt. The Church has been influenced to a large extent by the latter view, but Augustinianism, as a whole, was never officially accepted. Aquinas held that neither natural goodness nor freewill were destroyed by the Fall. Man lost the super-added gift of grace on which depended his original righteousness, resulting in the decrease of his inclination to virtue. The Anglican article (X) teaches that man 'cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God.' He has not lost responsibility for his conduct, so far he is free, but he cannot realize the full powers of that freedom without the grace of God. The Calvinistic theory of total depravity is hardly representative of Christianity as a whole, and has been justly criticized from the ethical point of view; 'it destroys morality, and it is, besides, untrue to fact.'<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of original sin implies (1) the recognition of the universal fact of sin, (2) the inheritance, in some sense, of a disorganized nature giving man a bias towards evil, (3) the consciousness in the adult that sin does not merely arise from animal instincts (which are natural to man) but to a positive perversion of them, producing a sense of guilt. Not that the undeveloped infant is 'personally' guilty, but that the child's tendency to evil, for an adult evaluation, is rightly classified as sin in an objective sense.

<sup>1</sup> Strong, *Manual of Theology*, p. 247.

Christianity not only recognizes the terrible actuality of sin, but also the perfection of the ideal for righteousness. 'Ye shall be perfect.' This ideal appears in the teaching of Christ, interpreted by his life and passion, and is made a living ideal by the Atonement. Such an ideal demands the sanctification of motive without reservation. Anger is condemned as murder in the making, the lustful look as the adultery of the heart, the need of an oath as a sign of dishonesty. *Agapē*, pure sacrificing love, is tested by a man's attitude to his enemies. The goal of the good life is perfection, and the token of discipleship whole-hearted surrender to it. So great a surrender can only be an act of grace, but grace enables man to choose, he does not passively surrender.

This leads us to the point that Christianity gives no countenance to de-humanization. Grace does not take the place of nature, but crowns nature. The instincts, in themselves, are not evil—we have already seen that the three primary instincts appear in the Creation narrative as part of God's plan. Genesis gives no countenance to de-humanization; man should not deny his instinctive life but express it aright.

The life of grace goes beyond mere law, and yet it is the fulfilment of the law. Law is not superseded by the Gospel, but lives on in the disciplined life. It is, however, no longer merely law, but an understanding of its spirit, with power from on high to achieve it. This brings us to the threshold of the doctrine of Salvation to be dealt with later.

From the ethical point of view the Christian life is supreme love to God realized in the purest sacri-

ficing love to our neighbour. Hence love to God is only possible in the divine society of the Kingdom of Heaven. *Agapē* in its full Christian sense is the accomplishment of the law. *Agapē* has nothing of the sensual in it, nothing of the grasping spirit. Its root meaning is 'reverence,' or 'regard,' for others (cf. *agē* 'reverence') and its significance is seen in the Cross. God so loved that He gave. . . . The sequel of the Cross was the Resurrection, the assurance of life beyond the grave, and the ground of the redeemed life of love perfected by mystic union with the Risen Lord. The doctrine of immortality was already involved in the conviction that the end of man was the vision of God, who 'is not the God of the dead, but of the living' (Mark xii, 27). Eternal Life, in this sense, is not merely the immortality of a disembodied spirit or of mind only, but the redemption of the whole man into the higher condition of incorruption and sanctification through the Redeemer's triumph over sin, for He 'shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory' (Phil. iii, 21).

## CHAPTER V

### SALVATION

RELIGIONS can be classified into legal and redemptive according to the emphasis they lay on (1) obedience to law, or (2) salvation from some undesirable state. Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Muhammedanism are, or became, legal religions; Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity are redemptive. Both elements, however, appear in all religions. The ritual, ethical or philosophical laws governing them give to religions their legal character, the hope of salvation from some unsatisfactory state give them their redemptive character.

We shall trace in this chapter the idea of 'salvation' as a single *fundamentum divisionis* applicable to all religion, indicating what seems to be the predominant character of each conception of salvation without prejudice to the fact that other ideas occur.

#### (a) SALVATION

##### (i) *Shintoism—from defilement*

We have already observed that Shintoism, apart from Confucian and Buddhist influence, is on a low ethical level, and that the sacred documents make no clear distinction between ceremonial defilement, disease or ethical wrong.

Sin was thought of predominantly as something unclean and defiling. Actual physical dirt was a sign of disrespect for the gods, and disease a sign of

their displeasure. Pollution might be contracted by contact with blood or a corpse, or by certain acts of impurity, such as incest or other unnatural passion. Ceremonial defilement also occurred at childbirth and marriage. To cut the body was also a defiling act. Other sins were mainly such as appeared in a primitive agricultural community, e.g., interfering with agricultural operations. Evil was regarded as a physical defilement which could be actually washed away or transmitted to an object as a scapegoat for destruction.

The ceremony of the Great Purification (*Oho-harahi*) was the supreme Shinto ritual of atonement; performed in the capital twice yearly or as a preliminary to great ceremonies. It is this ceremony that evinces the redemptive element in Shinto. By its performance the nation was purified from all its offences. The ritual included lustration, expiatory offerings and the recital of a *norito* or formula (not a 'prayer,' as it is sometimes called) in which the Mikado, by virtue of the authority transmitted to him from the Sun-goddess, declares to his ministers and people the absolution of their sins and impurities. Not only did the ceremony purge alike ritual and moral faults, but all acts of offence, whether committed inadvertently or deliberately. The idea of salvation involved in the ceremony was magical in character, viz., the belief that all who partook in it were cleansed from impurity *ex opere operato*.

There is no evidence in the *Oho-harahi* ceremony of an individual consciousness of sin, or of penitence, as the indication of a changed heart. The external act alone is contemplated not the intention or motive underlying it. External acts are expiated by an



external ritual. The words of the *norito* recited at the ceremony are 'the mighty ritual words of the celestial virtue' having the value of a ritual incantation. The *tsumi* or evil is thus got rid of by a magical act of 'avoidance' (*imi*). 'As the many-piled clouds of Heaven are scattered by the breath of the Wind-gods,' to quote the sacred *norito*, 'so shall all offences be utterly annulled.' The sacred formula was also helped out by the transmission of the evil to pieces of paper, which were rubbed on to the body, and carried out to sea, where they were sunk into deep water. By virtue of the 'scape-goat' offering, the defiling offences were removed from the community and the favour of the gods regained.

Shinto was not, like Hinduism or Buddhism, absorbed in the idea of release or redemption, and the external character of its list of heavenly and earthly offences suggests a legalistic basis. The religion of Pure Shinto, however, stripped, as its upholders maintain, of all Confucian and Buddhist accretions, is so elementary in character, that it is difficult to classify it as either legalistic or redemptive.

Shinto worship also aimed at gaining, from the beneficent *kami*, prosperous harvests and national success, and its brighter side, as a religion of gratitude, must not be forgotten. Kaibara Ekken (1629-1714) is a supreme example of this spirit. 'The best way of serving Heaven is by the preservation of the beautiful nature which Heaven has implanted in us all, and by love for humanity.'

(ii) *Confucianism (State)—from material distress*

Turning from Japan to China, we are confronted by a sacrificial system which set out to secure the

favourable working of the Tao or Way of Heaven, and thus to ensure the prosperity of the Emperor and his subjects. The chief aim of the system was salvation from material distress. But a very important element in the *modus operandi* was the right ordering of conduct. *Li* or 'propriety' meant conduct in all its ramifications from ritual and moral conduct to the simplest items of etiquette. The success of the sacrificial system depended on the correct ordering of every aspect of one's activity. Such conduct was not merely ritual, though its details might suggest this. As the sacred book says, '*li* has a root and a flower. Its root is faithfulness and sincerity; its flower is integrity and principle' (*Li Chi*). The sacrificial system of the State worship, however, did not aim at redemption from bad conduct or sin, but at 'relief from pressing material wants.'<sup>1</sup> Good conduct, ritual and ethical, was rather the means in the procedure for attaining salvation from the anxiety of famine and calamity, and for gaining the favour of Heaven. The sacrifices were not means of grace for attaining the good life.

The highest point in the development of the sacrificial system seems to have been in the Chou Dynasty (B.C. 1122-255), when sacrifices were offered to Heaven, in the winter solstice, and to the Earth, in the summer solstice. These were called the *Ta-tze*, or Great Sacrifices, and were held by the Confucianists not to have been offered to two separate deities (Heaven and Earth), but to the Supreme Deity of Heaven. The sacrifice to Heaven was offered, with great ceremony, on the circular

<sup>1</sup> Parker, *Salvation in World Religions*, p. 12.

altar of three marble terraces, south of Peking, and the sacrifice to Earth on the square marble altar north of Peking. The sacrifice to Heaven, like the Roman Saturnalia, occurred at the time when light was reborn, the ceremony having, as its primary object, the furthering of the Yang principle of light. The sacrifice to Earth in midsummer seems to have contemplated the fructification of the soil. At both these sacrifices offerings were made also to the Imperial ancestors and the heavenly bodies. The Emperor alone, in principle, offered worship on these Imperial occasions, and it was felt that the prosperity of the ruling house and the Empire depended on their correct and due performance. At the spring and autumn equinoxes there were the *Chung-tze* or Middle sacrifices to the Sun and Moon respectively. The term 'Middle sacrifices,' also applied to the rites offered to culture heroes, such as Sheng-nung, the 'divine husbandman.' Of the lower sacrifices (*Kiün-tze* or Collective) lesser officials made their offerings for their own districts, while in the home the householder propitiated the guardian of the door or of the cooking stove. Sacrifices were also universally offered to ancestors. Ancestor worship flourished pre-eminently amongst the people by the very fact that they were debarred from the Imperial worship and the official worship of the elemental deities. The ancestral offerings, like those of the State sacrifices, were mainly for material blessings. At the State sacrifices victims, such as a bullock or heifer to Heaven, were immolated, or gifts were consumed in the sacrificial flame.

The idea underlying the sacrifices is not expiation

or atonement but gift, as an acted prayer for averting calamity and obtaining blessings, or as an act of honour or gratitude to deity. The term *li* in Chinese is composed of three characters, (1) to inform, (2) grain, (3) sacrificial vessel. Sacrifice is an offering 'informing deity' of man's needs or feelings. There is no idea present of atonement from sin or longing for communion with the unseen. The belief in remission of sin by sacrifice is not, in any way, hinted at.

The ethical element, however, is a very important part of the sacrifice. 'Only the good man' states the *Li Chi*, 'is able to offer sacrifice properly.' Heaven looked for virtue in the man who offered sacrifice, but left him largely to his own resources in the struggle to achieve it. The ethical ideal seems, indeed, to have been part of the means for securing Imperial harmony and prosperity, rather than an end-in-itself worth gaining because of its essential or intrinsic value. But disinterested prayer for virtue, offered generally to ancestors, is by no means absent. Emperor Ching prays for virtue to his ancestor, 'O good and gracious father, hear and condescend to guard, to cherish, to enlighten me' (*Shih Ching*). Thus the sacrificial system was an incentive to morality, and for that reason Confucius was insistent as to its value. But the reform of Confucius was an attempt to make the ethical life more disinterested. Confucius begins not so much with the sacrifice, as with the five relationships, the basis of which is the innate sympathy for one's kind. On this foundation is reared the system of the five virtues. Here we are in the atmosphere of legalism, not of redemption. A study of man's nature shews

to him the ethical laws of his being, and these he must obey, not through divine grace, but through his own natural sense of right and wrong, aided by the example of sages and superiors.

(iii) *Zoroastrianism—from evil spirits*

Zarathushtra, aided by the Good Thought of Ahura Mazdah, was 'a true foe to the Liar' (the arch-spirit of evil) and arrayed all his strength against the marauding nomads and their spiritual guardians the evil *daēvas*. These evil beings gained their reputation for evil on account of the violence of their devotees. They sowed amongst men the seeds of bad thought, lies and arrogance, and were ever leading them astray from the righteousness and truth of Ahura Mazdah, defrauding mankind of happy life here and hereafter (*Gāthas* XXXII, 3-8). The prophet sought for himself and his followers salvation from these evil *daēvas*, and, in doing so, was seeking for salvation from moral evil. The divine attributes ('Good Thought,' 'Dominion,' 'Welfare' and 'Immortality') were also conceived of as gifts to man of the divine nature, assuring him that God was not only his ally in this warfare, but also the bestower of salvation or victory. The gift of Haurvatāt usually translated 'Welfare,' denotes wholeness, perfection, saving grace and hence salvation. Ahura Mazdah, by his 'Good Thought,' grants to man 'Dominion' over the demons, 'Salvation' from their evil power and 'Immortality.' This is redemption indeed. 'So may we,' says Zarathushtra, 'be those that make the world advance' (*Yasna* XXX, 9). The verb 'advance' gave rise to a technical term of the later

Avesta, 'Renovation,' or 'Regeneration,' signifying a future Messianic age when the world would be 'saved' from violence and wrong, and the Messiah Saoshyant (from *sav* 'benefit,' 'bless,' 'save') would appear as 'Deliverer' of mankind by his store of good deeds. This age is still for the Parsi a future event.

Zarathushtra abolished the ancient Iranian sacrifices. Salvation could come neither by animal victim nor sacred haoma. Men must use their unimpaired gift of freewill to choose aright, and all who sided with Ahura Mazdah were 'benefitters' (*saoshyanto*) of the world. Thus Zarathushtra follows up his message of 'Salvation' as a divine gift, by the appeal to men to use their power of choice and so become redeemers of mankind. As their good thoughts, words and deeds mounted up, so would they be routing the *daēvas*. The plural *saoshyanto* became eventually crystallized into the singular *Saoshyant*, the future Messiah, who was also called 'incarnate Right' (*astvat-ereta*).

This call to build up a treasury of good thoughts, words and deeds, on the basis of man's unimpaired free choice gives a legalistic tone to the religion. The idea of ethical redemption is not absent, as is evinced by the divine gifts to man of Right and Salvation, and by Zarathushtra's own conversion. But the prophet's teaching was not a view of life in which men were immediately translated by the grace of God into a new world of holiness. They had to build up gradually, by their own choice, a treasury of good works to rout the forces of evil, the goal being the Day of Regeneration when Ahriman would be defeated. Zoroastrianism is strongly

eschatological, and its chief strength lay in its hope of ultimate victory, rather than in a present sense of redemption. Zarathushtra's prayer 'This I ask thee, tell me truly,' has not the triumphant redemptive conviction of St. Paul's 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Yasna XLIV, and Romans vii).

In post-Gathic Zoroastrianism we find a more complicated account of the evil demons, and a less ethical method of combating them. The dualism was intensified, and demons innumerable come into being, *drujes* of 'falsehood,' *yatus* or wizards, and *pairikas* or enchantresses, thought of either as spirits or as assuming devilish animal and human forms. There is little organization in this host of evil spirits, as one would expect in the case of evil influences, which are disruptive and not systematizing. One of the most feared of the lesser spirits is the corpse-fiend *druj nasu*, the personification of the contagion arising from the decomposition of a dead body.

The idea of evil coming from the demons is regarded chiefly as pollution, and the notion of salvation is not unlike that of Shintoism, 'salvation from defilement.' The sacred *Vendidad* says 'Purity is for man, next to life, the greatest good.' Impurity is associated more vividly with demons in Zoroastrianism than in Shintoism. The *Vendidad* means 'anti-demonic law,' and is a code of purification against polluting spirits. The ethical basis of choice (*daēna*) taught by Zarathushtra has been largely set aside for magical methods of salvation. Impurity is not the result of wrong ethical choice; it is the physical state of a person possessed of a

demon which should be expelled. The methods of expulsion and expiation are chiefly magical in character; (1) incantation or utterance of sacred *manthra*, (2) the look of a dog to expel *druj nasu*, (3) use of gomez, (4) animal sacrifice, which re-entered the religion, (5) punishment by stripes—the atoning punishment for killing a sacred dog being far greater than that for murder. Earth, fire and water are sacred, and a sin which involves the defiling of any of them, such as burying the dead, is inexpiable, i.e., the penalty is death here and torments hereafter.

The high ethical ideal of Zarathushtra was, however, never entirely eclipsed, and the conviction was maintained, in the doctrine of salvation, that good thought, words and deeds can effectively rout demoniacal influence. The *Dinkart*, a Pahlavi summary of lost Avestan texts, urges that purity only comes with heartfelt atonement, and a sincere determination to redeem past failure by future good works. Parsiism encourages the repetition of a *Patet* (confession of sin) before a dastur or high priest, especially if the sinner is *in extremis*, praising righteousness, confessing sin and vowing amendment. This is to be followed, if the sick man recovers, by the expiation of penance, and good works, such as charity or the killing of noxious animals.

#### (iv) *Taoism—from activity*

Taoism as a popular religion has aimed at discovering the secret of immortality and forestalling the designs of unfavourable spirits. The prevailing form of salvation in popular Taoism is 'salvation



from evil spirits.' For the ignorant it was an unmoralized belief in spirits, in which welfare from their malevolence was sought, by resorting to a Taoist adept; for the more enlightened it was moralized belief in future rewards, dispensed by good or bad spirits, according to a man's conduct on earth. There is, however, no clear theory of salvation, popular Taoism is mainly a magical conflict with malevolent spirits or a scheme of future rewards as a sanction for morality.

In contrast with popular Taoism Lao-tze, the founder, propounded a scheme of salvation affirming that man could attain relief from the activity of life, and from the strife and turmoil of its artificial systems and methods. The 'Kingdom of Heaven' is not to be taken by violence, but will come only to those whose quiet preparedness enables it to fulfil itself in them. The *Tao-teh-Ching* urges that 'the Kingdom is a spirit-like thing, and cannot be got by active doing. He who would so win it destroys it; he who would hold it in his grasp loses it' (XXIX, 1). Salvation comes, not by sacrifices or systems, but by a spirit of passive receptiveness. 'Purity and stillness give the correct law to all under Heaven' (XLV, 2). Such passive receptiveness enables the Tao to work in man. To possess the Tao, or Supreme Way and Reason of things, is to attain salvation from strife and the power of spontaneous achievement. 'It is the way (Tao) of Heaven not to strive, and yet it skilfully overcomes; not to speak and yet it is skilful in obtaining a reply. Its demonstrations are quiet and yet its plans are skilful and effective' (LXXIII, 2).

Salvation is wrought negatively, by clearing

hindrances out of the way, by ridding oneself of theories and passions, and positively, by becoming one with the revealed Tao. Thus a man is released from a mere artificial activity and attains 'act non-act,' Heaven's law of free spontaneous achievement. The possession of Tao is redemption from 'vanity and vexation of spirit,' from the endless clamour of theorists and reformers, from meddling laws and confusing philosophies, all of which prevent the simple way from revealing itself. If a man accords with Tao in all things he is identified with Tao, *quem nōsse vivere cui servire regnare est*. He attains ideal functioning here and immortality hereafter. The Confucian system of 'following after charity and duty to one's neighbour' is useless externalism and, when the Tao works in a man, he is, without effort, free from passion and ratiocination; and he practices, without realizing any virtue in it, gentleness, frugality and humility (LXVII, 2).

This scheme of salvation is a quietist one and, in spite of a certain attractiveness, leads logically to a world-denying religion. A large number of Taoist saints, like Lao-tze himself, have disappeared from the normal activity of life and sought Tao in the quiet contemplation of hermitic life. Popular Taoism, on the other hand, has failed to translate this teaching into life, having sought other methods of salvation than that of the mystic philosophy of Lao-tze.

(v) *Hinduism—from the world*

The religion of Hinduism is essentially a religion of redemption, and has gone farther than Taoism in its denial of life. The words *moksha* 'emancipation,'

*rakshanā* 'rescue,' and *sreyas* 'welfare,' are significant of an insistent longing for redemption from the ills of earthly existence to

that blessed mood,  
In which the burthen of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world  
Is lightened.

The prevailing view of salvation has its roots in the *Upanishads*, where we see the developing conviction that the world of sense has only relative value and release is sought from the limiting conditions of the seen and temporal for the Eternal Reality of Brāhman

From the unreal lead me to the real !  
From darkness lead me to light !  
From death lead me to immortality !

(*Bṛihad. Up.*)

The means of salvation in India are interpreted differently according to the particular school of thought to which one belongs, the methods falling under the headings of (1) *Karma marga*—salvation by works, (2) *Jñāna marga*—salvation by knowledge, (3) *Bhakti marga*—salvation by faith.

The *Karma marga* is the way of salvation by sacrifice. The original orthodox system Karma Mīmāṃsa held that the soul was rewarded with bliss here and hereafter by means of the sacrifices, without the help of God, whose existence is denied. When, however, man came to seek for freedom from all worldly things, it was held that sacrifice was not enough. By regulating his conduct he could attain

liberation from the world and freedom of the soul from the body, the soul surviving as a mere existence without cognition. According to Prabhākara, an exponent of the Karma Mīmāṃsa, knowledge was also necessary to such salvation, but Kumārila (eighth century) gave knowledge a subordinate place. The normal ideal for the *Karma marga* was not liberation, but the conscious reward of bliss in this and other worlds by means of the sacrificial rites.

This last philosophy of life has not, however, been the most satisfying one for India, and *Jñāna marga*, or salvation by knowledge, came into the ascendent. The Vedānta of Sāṅkara is its most authoritative exposition. Works as such are unavailing, for all activity, whether ritual or ethical, produces *karma* and the continuance of transmigration. The right kind of works do, however, have a negative value, in producing the peace of soul necessary to salvation, viz., tranquillity, control of passions, renunciation, patient endurance, concentration (*samādhi*) and faith. The moral life is a good preparatory school, but its highest hope is a happy rebirth on earth or in heaven. Salvation or emancipation comes only as a revelation, not through any effort of will or understanding, but by an intuitive knowledge of the identity of the soul with Brāhman. Then there is no more rebirth either in earth or heaven, man is no longer under the power of works, and the illusion of a separate ego and of a phenomenal universe vanishes. A man who attains this salvation before death, lives out his allotted span by virtue of the *karma* still unexhausted and unspent. One who worships God as personal (*Īśvara*) will, on attaining this knowledge,

experience it as the grace of *Isvara*, but the personal idea of God (the projection of the self) will come to an end, as the true self attains its identity with *Brāhman*. The teaching of *Sancara* gives no real significance or value to the world process; salvation is the sweeping aside of this delusive veil of *avidyā*, an unsatisfactory 'dream of *Brāhman*'—salvation is redemption from the world.

The *Sāmkhya* is another system of *Jnana marga*, whereby the soul is freed from the illusion of matter. Salvation comes through the true knowledge of the nature of soul, as taught in the system.

The *Yoga* is a *Karma marga*, the inducement of mental states, culminating in trance (*samādhi*) for attaining salvation.

In the last three philosophical systems (*Vedānta*, *Sāmkhya* and *Yoga*) salvation is a world-denying ideal.

The ideal of salvation by *Bhakti*, or 'loving trustful devotion' towards a personal deity, is an attempt to be world affirming. It came as a reaction against the philosophical systems, and is the belief that salvation is attained by loving trust and confidence in the saving grace (*prasāda*) of divine love. The *Bhakti marga* maintains not only the personality of God, but the reality of the soul and the universe. This belief has its roots in some passages of the *Upanishads* (*Katha* II, 20, *Svet* III, 20), but it first appears clearly in the *Bhagavad Gita* where *Krishna* appears as an *avatar* or descent to earth. 'He who knows in verity My divine birth and works, comes not again to birth when he has left the body; he comes to Me, O *Arjuna*' (IV, 9). The *Gita* is not consistent in its teaching but its prevailing view is 'immortality' and 'absolute joy' (XIV, 27)

with Krishna. The philosophical presentation of the *Bhakti* religion was made by Ramanuja. Brāhman is the eternal personal *Isvara*, the world is not illusion, and the soul remains for ever as a conscious existence distinct from God. Salvation is by faith (*bhakti*) but works are also contemplated, in the spirit of the Gita, i.e., carried out without passion or desire for reward. *Bhakti* came to mean, to a very large extent, complete trust in God apart from works, a grace which neither gives nor waits on human merit. Salvation is wholly a work of divine love. The school of Ramanuja later broke up into two separate bodies on the question of works, the 'northern' maintaining the need of works, the 'southern' upholding the doctrine of free grace and surrender, without works. Both divisions teach the doctrine of *bhakti* and *prapatti* (surrender) but the first abides by 'co-operative' grace (the ape-theory, because the young clings to its mother), and the second by 'irresistible grace' (the cat theory, because the kitten is carried by its mother).

Though there is an attempt, in the *Bhakti* theory, to affirm the reality of the world, the worshipper still feels 'the burthen . . . of all this unintelligible world.' Otto has significantly said of Ramanuja, 'affirmation of the reality of the world is not what he lacks, but he does lack entirely the positive *evaluation* of the world.'<sup>1</sup> The *Bhakti* saints consequently, to a very great extent, forsook civil duties for ecstatic worship. Tukaram (1608-49) exclaims

To me the world shall seem  
Like visions of a dream.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Otto, *India's Religion of Grace*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Macnicol, *Psalms of Mārāthā Saints*, p. 77.

The motto of the *Bhakti marga* is not 'ye shall be holy, for I am holy,' but 'ye are submerged in the world and enchained. But I will bring you forth.'<sup>1</sup> Sin (*klesa*) is not the violation of a holy law, but the selfishness and distress which is bound up with mundane existence. And it is mundane existence from which ultimately the Hindu seeks release.

(vi) *Buddhism—from sorrow and craving*

Buddhism, as a true child of India, is both redemptive and world-denying in character. The Pali documents present Buddha's teaching as a deliverance from the sorrow and pain involved in the craving or passion for life. 'My law and discipline is impregnated with one flavour, with the flavour of deliverance' (*Cullavagga*, ix, 1, 4). *Nirvana*, the goal of the Buddhist, we have already seen is best interpreted as 'unqualified deliverance'—release from the whirlpool of re-births to a state of bliss unspeakable, which cannot be described as either existence or non-existence, but where all suffering, craving and 'individual' existence is extinguished. The redemptive character of Buddhism is exemplified by its terminology. The *arhat* or perfected saint (from *arh* 'to be fit') attains health or well-being (*suvatthi*, *sotthi*); security, or salvation (*khema*). Animal sacrifice as a means to salvation was discontinued in Buddhism, because (1) as an external ceremony it could avail nothing, (2) it caused suffering to animals, and (3) the benefits ordinarily expected from it were far from spiritual. All external aids are regarded as futile—deity, revelation and priest, went the same way as sacrifice.

<sup>1</sup> Otto, *India's Religion of Grace*, p. 102.

Salvation is acquired by mental and moral discipline, aided by refuge (*sarana*) in the Buddha, the Law and the Brotherhood. The aspirant must work out his own salvation by focusing his mental outlook (*dhitti*) and directing his intent (*samkappa*), on the destruction of craving and thirst. He must order his speech, conduct and livelihood to accord with this mental outlook, and by mind-mastery, lucidity of attention, and meditation, eventually attain *nirvana*.

What is the place of 'desire' in this scheme of salvation? A man must, in some sense, 'desire' to reach his goal, and yet Buddhism is said to depreciate all desire. The three terms used in this connection are *tanhā*, *kāma* and *chanda*, and their use is not entirely consistent.

The most common term is *tanhā*, signifying 'craving' or 'thirst' rather than normal desire. It is the most depreciated of the three terms. The earliest references are mainly to *particular* kinds of craving, 'thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity,' such as these are the cause of sorrow. But the view develops that all *tanhā*, as such, is the origin of ill. 'In whom *tanhā* has departed before death, he is indeed a sage' (*Sutta Nipata*). But even thirst may have a laudable purpose, for 'with the aid of thirst does one eliminate thirst' (*Anguttara*).

*Kāma* (desire) was used in the *Bṛihad. Upaniṣad* to signify the desire or spiritual longing of man for the divine (*Ātman*) within the breast (IV, 5, 6). Such aspiration or desire of the self extinguishes all other desires (IV, 4, 6). But, by the time of the Buddhist Suttas, the word *kāma* seems to have fallen on to a lower level, and is associated with



*tanhā* as a thing to be got rid of in itself—‘stop the stream valiantly—drive away desires’ (Pl. of *kāma*).

*Chanda* (wish) seems to be the least tainted of this trilogy. The *Sutta Nipata* associates it with faith, insight and conciliation, and gives the word a higher connotation by the prefix *dhamma*—‘righteous’ or ‘regenerate’ desire. But there is also an unregenerate *chanda*—‘from wish (*chanda*) originate clear objects, and the greed that prevails in the worlds’ (*Dhammapada*).<sup>1</sup>

Buddhism does not then entirely depreciate all desire, but its scheme of salvation involves the elimination of all craving, desire and wishing except the aspiration or intent (*samkappa*, *dhammachanda*) for *nirvana*.

*Nirvana* can be attained in this life, and only awaits the final working off of residual karma to gain, at death, *pari-nirvana* or complete extinction. The records present Buddhism as a twofold way; (1) the monastery for the direct attainment of *nirvana*, and (2) lay-membership with the ultimate goal of salvation in another life. The religion, in this sense, is world-denying, but the missionary mendicancy, with its sympathy for all beings, indicates a ‘world-affirming’ love for one’s kind.

The methods of salvation in the various forms of quasi-Mahāyāna and Mahāyāna sects may be classified into (1) self help (*shodomen*), (2) the help of another (*jodomen*), (3) meditation (*dhyana*). The philosophical sects, the Hosso, Tendai and Kegon, represent the hard way of self help, and call for strenuous philosophical discipline. In reaction

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rhys Davids, *The Birth of Indian Psychology*, pp. 115, 277, 280, 282.

against the hard way of *shodomen* appeared the way of *jodomen*, represented by the 'Salvation' sects (Jodo, Shin, Nembutsu). The Jodo or Pure Land Sect affirms that salvation is attained by Faith on Amida Buddha. Freedom from passion and suffering could be found in homage to Amida, by repetition of his name 'Hail, Amida Buddha,' independently of the monastery. The Nembutsu emphasized the reality of 'intercession,' viz. that, by calling on Amida, the worshipper is saving mankind, for, on the principle of race solidarity, merit influences others as well as ourselves. The Shin Sect lays yet greater stress than its predecessors on salvation by faith and faith alone, the repetition of the name was not the means of salvation, but gratitude for a freely bestowed saving grace. Buddhism managed to become a religion of the world, in striking contrast with its monastic forms, by asserting that faith alone could save so that even though man lived in the world, the saving grace of Amida was available. This led, as we have seen, to the dissociation of conduct from religion, salvation was purely by faith, irrespective of conduct.

The *dhyana* method of salvation is represented chiefly by the Zen Sect. Salvation comes by meditation and moral discipline of a stringent character. All this is preparation, not means. The conviction of the unity of the individual with the universal Buddha comes as a revelation and is not induced; it very commonly appears as a sudden illumination or conversion (*satori*).

The most popular means of salvation in the Far East is that of the *jodomen*, the feeling after a personal Saviour.

## (b) SALVATION FROM SIN

(i) *Judaism—The Righteousness and Holiness of God*

The religion of the Old Testament is primarily legalistic, it bids the Hebrew obey the divine precepts in order to win God's saving grace—the preservation of the nation from its enemies. But in the exilic picture of the suffering servant there is presented the figure of one whose voluntary humiliation is an *āshām* or guilt-offering for a sinful people suggesting that the grace of salvation precedes the power to serve God aright. The post-exilic sacrifices were atoning for sin, but legalism gradually gained the upper hand, till the question became that of the lawyer 'What must I do to attain eternal life?' not 'What has God done for me?'

But the idea of salvation is essential to Biblical religion. There are a number of terms in the Old Testament for various aspects of divine salvation.

There are the derivatives of the root *yāshā* ('to be spacious'), 'salvation,' 'rescue,' 'welfare'; also the verbs 'to cause to live' (Hiphil of *hāyāh*); 'to deliver' (Hi of *nāṣā*); 'to redeem' (*gā'al*); to ransom (*pādāh*); besides the sacrificial terms, especially *kipper* 'to atone,' 'to cover,' and *hitte* 'to un-sin' or 'cleanse.'

God is the Saviour of Israel. 'I am the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour' (Isaiah xliii, 3); 'Father' and 'Redeemer' (lxiii, 16). Even with the development of the hope of an ideal King who should effect Salvation, the Saviour and Judge is always Yahweh Himself.

In the doctrine of the covenant, the guiding

principle of pre-exilic religion, salvation was preservation of the nation from its enemies, the condition of such salvation being obedience. Yahweh's relationship to Israel was not one of nature but of choice, His choice of them depending (on any future occasion) upon Israel's obedience to the divine precepts. A free choice could as easily be annulled as initiated. Hence Israel's religion was an ethical one depending upon good conduct. But salvation meant the preservation of the nation from material danger, not primarily from sin. 'If ye will obey . . . then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me among all peoples' (Exodus xix. 4). As Yahweh had rescued the nation from Egypt so would he rescue them from future enemies. But if they sinned he would reject them. Hence whenever Israel was delivered up into the hands of its enemies, it was interpreted as a punishment for sin. God's grace depended on conduct, rather than conduct being the outcome of grace. Hence Hebrew religion was legalistic rather than redemptive. Man had to be obedient to the law in order to be saved.

But the doctrine of the covenant presupposed the righteousness of God. The divine righteousness meant primarily God's faithfulness to his covenant, viz., that he could be relied on to save an obedient nation, and to punish it if disobedient. 'He is a God which keepeth covenant and mercy' (Deuteronomy vii, 9).

In practically all references salvation is limited to this life. It is not other-worldly but higher-worldly, with the object of making this world a better place to live in. Before the exile it also meant primarily the salvation of the nation, but with the

exile there arose a clearer sense of individualism, and the adumbration of the belief in the redemption of the individual after death (Job xix, 25-27).

The sacrifices were a divinely appointed system for maintaining or renewing the bond of communion between God and man, established by 'the covenant relationship.' The predominating idea, from the human aspect, was the notion of a gift to God, strengthened by the idea of blood and first-fruits as 'givers of life.' But the ruling principle of sacrifice was the fact of God's appointment. 'I have given it to you upon the altar' (Leviticus xvii, 11). God's holiness demanded holiness in his people, and any want of holiness separated man from God. The sacrifices were the divinely appointed means of restoring communion broken by impurity or sin. The pre-exilic sacrifices, peace-offering (*shelem*) and burnt-offering (*'ōlāh*) were associated more commonly with festivity and thanksgiving. The post-exilic sin and guilt offerings (*ḥāttā'th* and *āshām*) were of a more penitential character, and expiated not only physical impurities, but unwitting and inadvertent sins, and, in the case of the guilt-offering, sins where reparation was possible.

The sacrifices presupposed God's saving grace in choosing Israel and preserving it from danger, and were appointed by God for keeping the covenant unimpaired. Virtually they expiated or saved men only from venial sins, those errors and ignorances that did not amount to a deliberate breaking of the covenant. They had no power to atone from mortal sin, the sin of a high hand. Such was apostasy or idolatry, deliberate murder, or adultery. These sins implied a deliberate breaking of the

covenant and, to save the nation from consenting in them, the offender paid the death penalty. For these the sacrifices were of no avail. Death alone was a propitiation.

The social sins denounced by the prophets were regarded by them as sins of a high hand for which the cultus had no saving power. 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice' (Hosea vi, 6). The prophets emphasized, in contrast with the sacrificial system, the covenant idea of moral obedience as the condition of salvation. 'He hath shewed thee O man what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' (Micah vi, 8). The covenant had been broken by the sin of the nation, involving God's rejection of his people. But there was His further promise, for the remnant, of a new covenant, whereby God, in his grace, would put the law in man's inward parts (Jeremiah xxxi, 33). This doctrine of a new covenant implied the true redemptive idea of God's sufficiency as the cause of ethical holiness. 'I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them' (Ezekiel xxxvii, 23). The psalmist expresses a similar thought:

Help us, O God of our salvation for the Glory of  
thy Name

And deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy  
Name's sake (lxxix, 9).

In the conception of the suffering servant the prophetic and priestly ideas met on the plane of vicarious suffering. The suffering servant satisfied the prophetic demand for innocency of life, and

became a priestly guilt offering (*āshām*) for the nation. A few exiles, true to Yahweh, suffering along with the guilty, suggested the idea of *servus domini* as *servus omnium*. At the sight of their innocent suffering the conscience of the nation is quickened. The 'servant' not only inspires the guilty with a longing for holiness, but is also a guilt-offering atoning for the sins of Israel, bringing a knowledge of God's saving grace even to the Gentiles. 'He was wounded for our transgressions . . . and with his stripes we are healed'—'a light to lighten the Gentiles that my salvation may be unto the end of the earth' (Isaiah liii, 5 ; xlix, 6).

The later history of the doctrine of salvation fails to take account of this high-water mark of Jewish belief. Psalm cxix becomes the ideal of the Pharisee, delight in the law as the means of winning God's mercy and saving grace. Legalism gains the day.

So we pass to the Fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) when the sacrificial system came to an end, and the surviving synagogue worship accentuated the legalistic spirit. 'Woe unto us our place of expiation is destroyed,' cried a disciple, but ben Zacchai replied 'Have no fear. We have still an expiation which is worth that of the sacrifices—which is the exercise of works of charity, for it is written "I desired mercy and not sacrifice".' In the place of sacrifices there continued the study of the law, repentance, prayer, almsgiving, faith and fasting. The merit of good actions and study of the law were as efficacious in washing away sin as the ancient sacrifices (*Yoma* 23a, *Baba bathra* 9a).<sup>1</sup> The very study of the law became

<sup>1</sup> Vincent, *Judaism*, p. 165.

a *summum bonum* possessing a saving influence. It had in it the promise and potency of salvation.

Morris Joseph goes even so far as to say that in Judaism 'no superhuman ally is needed by the atoning soul. The forces in the sinner's own breast suffice.'<sup>1</sup> But this statement does not mean to deny that God, as the great law-Giver, is the ultimate source of salvation.

Judaism teaches the necessity for divine grace, but also insists that grace comes through the study of the Torah, and its application to life; 'He who endeavours to walk in the way of righteousness, secures the aid of heaven' (*Shabbath* 104a). Man is free in spite of Adam's fall. The need of 'prevenient' grace is, therefore, not so clearly enunciated as the need for right choice, which brings grace in its train. Indeed right actions produce merit (*zekout*), such merit having the power of expiation either on behalf of the doer himself or for others. This latter idea of transferred merit appears in the doctrine of 'the merit of the fathers,' referred to, for example, in the Amidah prayer, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord . . . who rememberest the pious deeds of the patriarchs, and in love wilt bring a redeemer to their children's children.'<sup>2</sup> Hence the idea of mediation is not foreign to Judaism, and there developed also the Rabbinic doctrine of death as a sin-offering, viz., that the death of the righteous is an atonement for the sin of his generation.<sup>3</sup>

Judaism, however, seldom forgets that man is free and that right choice procures salvation, rising,

<sup>1</sup> E.R.E., Vol. XI, pp. 138 and 141.

<sup>2</sup> Singer, *Authorized Prayer Book*, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> E.R.E., Vol. XI, p. 27.



in its best expression, to the disinterested service of God, and the conviction of 'assisting' grace.

(ii) *Islam—the Sovereign will of God*

Islam is 'submission' to the eternal decrees of Allah, and is thus legalistic in character. Man is bidden to obey God, and is threatened with terrible punishment if he fails to submit himself to the sovereign will of God and the divine decrees. The sovereignty of Allah is so completely realized, that man, strictly, cannot act other than God wills. Nevertheless he is commanded to obey, and the way of salvation is obedience to the commands of the *Qur'an*, with adherence to one of the orthodox schools of jurisprudence. In simpler terms, for the majority, it is the performance of the five pillars; confession, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage.

There is no doctrine of redemption in the sense of a changed life effected by an atoning act of grace. The need for atonement is indeed recognized. The term *kaffārah*, 'atonement,' is related to the Hebrew *kipper*, 'to cover.' Such atonement is effected, not by sacrifice, but by prescribed conduct. The sacrifices at Mina, during the annual pilgrimage, are commemorative and not expiatory. Alms are an expiation for sin (V, 49). Feeding and clothing the poor, setting free a captive, and (if these are too expensive) fasting are expiations for a perjured oath (V, 91). 'Good deeds drive away evil deeds' (XI, 116). Alms given in secret 'will do away your sins' (II, 273). Atonement is thus legal in character, the expiation resting entirely upon man's repentance and God's responsive mercy.

Yet divine 'guidance' makes the good life

effectual. 'Say: verily guidance of Allah—that is the guidance' (II, 115). The *Qur'an* is 'a guidance to the God-fearing . . . These are guided by their Lord; and with these it shall be well' (II, 4), 'True guidance is guidance from Allah' (III, 66). There is a fatalistic note in this doctrine of guidance. 'God guideth whom He will' (XXVIII, 56). 'They who set their face with resignation Godward and do what is right, their reward is with their Lord; no fear shall come to them, neither shall they be grieved.' (II, 106.)

Salvation is a predestined 'reward,' not a means of grace. It is the reward of Paradise. The word *najāh* or salvation is actually only once used in the *Qur'an*, owing to the predominantly legalistic conception of obedience. It appears in Sura XL. 'O my people! How is it that I bid you to salvation, but that ye bid me to the fire?' (44). The reward of Paradise is also spoken of as a 'deliverance' (*khalās*).

The means are ethical in character. It is a reward for almsgiving, forgiveness, continence, fidelity, prayer, faith and repentance—above all for following the prophet, not to be a follower is an unpardonable crime (III, 127; XXIII, 1-11). The fundamentally ethical character of Islam is, however, denied by the promise of material and sensual rewards (LXXVI, 16; LVI, 22). Such a view of salvation is in accord with the belief that whatever God wills is good because He wills it. There is not a clear determining idea of divine ethical holiness shaping the life of man into a better mould hereafter. Mutazilite theologians, with a deeper sense of ethical values, have symbolized the teaching on the

sensual delights of Paradise, but it is impossible to escape the original literal meaning. The ethical basis of salvation is also weak in that intellectual assent to the creed, belief in Allah and his prophet, is sufficient to gain admission to Paradise without good works, immediately if a Moslem dies for his faith, but eventually, after purgation, if he dies naturally.

Muhammedanism is, then, a legalistic religion. Atonement is wrought by repentance and obedience. God's guidance is fatalistic in character, and there is no belief in a moral change of heart as a gift of redeeming grace.

#### (c) SALVATION FROM SIN: THE HOLY LOVE OF GOD—CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is essentially the religion of redemption. Its nerve and significance is its power to save. 'Jesus' is a form of the Hebrew word 'salvation'—'thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins' (Matthew i, 21); 'for the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost' (Luke xix, 10). To be in Christ is to be a new creature. Whereas Jewish legalism failed to help St. Paul in his conflict with sin, Christ gave him the victory he sought. 'I . . . died unto law that I might live unto God . . . crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me' (Galatians ii, 19-20) 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth' (Romans i, 16). Christ was Redeemer, as well as Revealer and Teacher. The founders of other religions were 'counsellors with discernment,' whose

teaching and life work set their generations on to higher paths. But Jesus offered Himself to men also as Supreme Revealer and Saviour. 'Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him' (Matthew xi, 27), 'For verily the Son of Man came . . . to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many' (Mark x, 45). St. Peter confesses Him to be Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matthew xvi, 16); St. Paul acknowledges that in Him 'we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins' (Colossians i, 14); St. John writes 'He is the propitiation for our sins' (1 John ii, 2).

Amida Buddha, Rama and Krishna claimed to save men by faith. But the claim was made for them by devotees who lived many generations afterwards, and idealized them out of recognition. In the case of Christ the earliest records, the writings of St. Paul, and the earliest Gospel, St. Mark, present us with a supernatural Saviour, within the generation following His crucifixion. Besides, in Buddhism and Hinduism salvation so easily came to mean salvation by faith without sanctification of life.

Christ not only gave men a conviction of sin, but the power to rise above it to holiness of life. The idea of salvation is bound up with the Christian conception of God as Father, whose love is supremely pure, and who is for ever seeking to draw all men unto Him. The Cross is the expression of that love and represents the tremendous cost of man's redemption (*apolutrōsis*) from sin. On the analogy of the ancient sacrifices, it was an expiation (*hilastērion*) for sin, yet achieving, once and for all,

what those continually offered sacrifices were unable finally to accomplish. The change wrought by the Cross was experienced as 'a new birth' (John iii, 7) or being 'begotten again' of God (1 Peter i, 3; 1 John iii, 9) as the 'adoption of sons' (Galatians iv, 5) or as becoming a 'new creature' (2 Corinthians v, 17). This new life of forgiveness and achievement comes, not as a reward for good works, but by surrender in faith to Christ's free gift of grace. Justification by faith is the acceptance of man into the divine favour, not in virtue of what he is, but of what he whole-heartedly aspires to be. The effect of justification is the sanctification of life, not by mere human ability, but by the transformation of human effort through the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is also called the Fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance. 'They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof' (Galatians v, 22-24).

The doctrine of atonement involved in the Christian idea of salvation has been interpreted in various ways. The fact of atonement is recognized by all, but its rationale variously formulated. The earliest formulations were made on the analogy of a ransom price paid to release a captive from bondage—the release being from the power of Satan and sin involved in captivity to him. The ransom theory appears in the writings of Irenaeus (second century), Origen (third century) and Augustine (fourth century). In the eleventh century Anselm held that the atonement was the rendering of a satisfaction to God for the violation of his honour incurred by the sin of mankind.

Christ alone could offer such satisfaction, because He was divine and free from sin, and because, as Man, He alone could render for His fellow men what they were unable to offer owing to their sins. Abelard, the younger contemporary of Anselm, maintained as against the theory of a debt to Satan or a satisfaction to God, the exemplarist theory, already hinted at in the theology of Augustine. The atonement, according to this interpretation, is not viewed as a satisfaction which must be made, in the nature of things through the terrible effects of sin, but as an example and inspiration to man. God effects the atonement or reconciliation of man by the supreme example of sacrificing love, inducing the sinner to follow the path of love and righteousness, and so freeing him from the penalty of Adam's sin.

The theory of Anselm ruled the mediæval Church and reappears in a less rigid form in Aquinas. This interpretation has been called the 'objective theory' in contrast with the 'subjective theory' of Abelard. The one maintains that the atoning sacrifice was 'objectively necessary,' owing to the holiness of God and the demand of the moral order, involved in that supreme holiness. The other takes its stand on the 'subjective' influence of the divine love and holiness on the soul of the disciple. Both aspects are correlative to one another. The Cross was the inevitable effect of the all-holiness of God in the face of human sin, it was also a Revelation or manifestation of that holiness drawing all men to Christ (John xii, 32). A purely objective salvation would be magic, a purely subjective salvation would be humanism—neither, in isolation, being a true redemption from sin. Sin had brought on the

terrible necessity of the Cross, the logical outcome of the surpassing purity and love of God. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,' in a way that God alone could effect. And yet the sacrifice was not something which changed God's attitude from that of wrath to love. It is His nature always to seek man and to react against sin. The sacrifice brought man to God. 'Christ also suffered for sins . . . that He might bring us to God' (1 Peter iii, 18). The fact of Christ, His passion and death, convicts man of guilt, and faith or complete surrender to Christ is the token of man's whole-hearted and sincere desire to be pure as He is pure, and, at the same time, it is his justification or pardon through the mercy and grace of God, expressing itself in sanctification or progress in the life of virtue. The triumph of God in Christ over sin becomes our triumph over sin.

The mystery of innocent suffering, one of the insoluble problems of philosophy, also gains in meaning in the light of the Cross. A great deal of inevitable suffering is due either directly or indirectly to sin, and that which is borne lovingly and patiently has an atoning and redeeming power over others whose sins have caused suffering. The sin of man likewise crucified Christ, and in Him man finds redemption. Not merely because love's sacrifice moves the sinner to repentance but also because he learns that even God suffers, and he knows enough at least to realize that suffering has a meaning in the nature of things.

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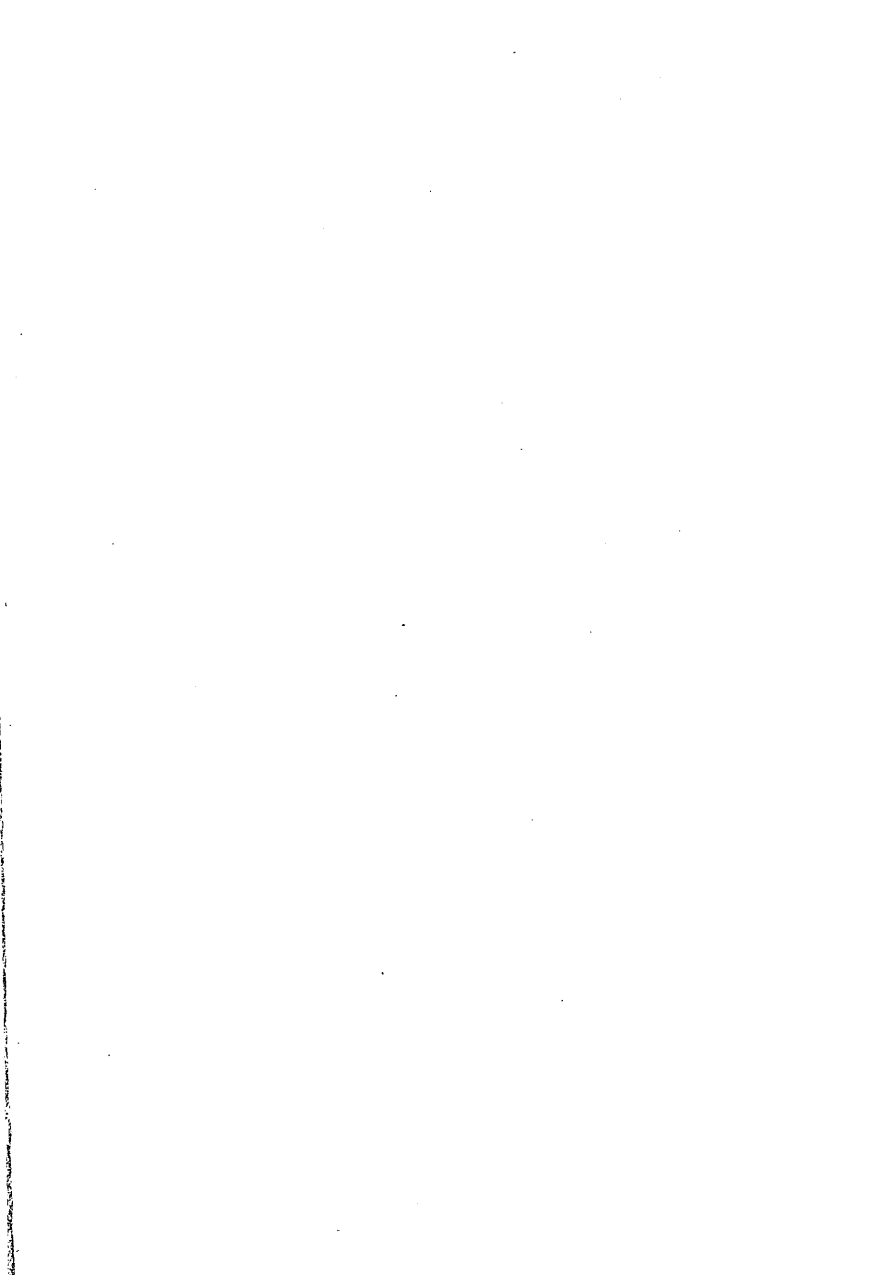
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